

✠ ALTHEIA ✠

RIGHT REV. J. D. RICARDS, D. D.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BX 1751  
Chap. .... Copyright No. ....

Shelf R48

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



JUL 5 1885





Charles J. W.

ALETHEIA;  
OR,  
THE OUTSPOKEN TRUTH  
ON THE ALL-IMPORTANT QUESTION

Of Divine Authoritative Teaching.

AN EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
CATHOLIC RULE OF FAITH

CONTRASTED WITH THE VARIOUS THEORIES OF  
*Private and Fallible Interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.*

WITH A FULL EXPLANATION OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF

INFALLIBILITY,

AND APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES TO THE

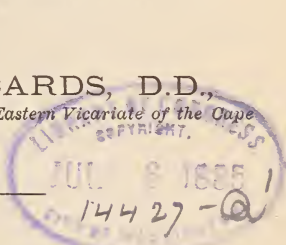
DEVELOPMENT

OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE TIMES.

BY THE

Right Rev. J. D. RICARDS, D.D.,

*Bishop of Retimo, and Vicar-Apostolic of the Eastern Vicariate of the Cape Colony.*



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND ST. LOUIS:

BENZIGER BROTHERS,

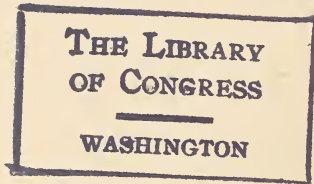
PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE.

LONDON: R. WASHBOURNE.

DUBLIN: M. H. GILL & SON.

1885.

BX1751  
R48



---

COPYRIGHT, 1885, BY BENZIGER BROTHERS.

---



To His Eminence  
HENRY EDWARD, CARDINAL MANNING,  
*Archbishop of Westminster.*

THIS BOOK,  
SUGGESTED BY THE STUDY OF THE WORKS OF HIS EMINENCE,  
AND HELPED TO ITS  
COMPLETION BY HIS WORDS OF KIND ENCOURAGEMENT,  
IS DEDICATED BY PERMISSION.

THE CHIEF REASON WHICH HAS MOVED THE AUTHOR TO ASK OF  
HIS EMINENCE TO ALLOW HIM  
TO LAY IT AT HIS FEET IS, THAT HIS EMINENCE,  
ON ALL OCCASIONS WHERE IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SPEAK IN  
PUBLIC OR PRIVATE OF THE LAND OF THE AUTHOR'S BIRTH,  
HAS BORNE WILLING TESTIMONY  
TO THE INDOMITABLE FAITH AND GENEROSITY AND PIOUS ZEAL OF  
**Catholic Ireland.**

IT SEEMED TO HIM, THEREFORE,  
THAT A BOOK WHICH HE EARNESTLY HOPES WILL SERVE  
IN SOME DEGREE TO KEEP ALIVE THE PIETY OF "THE SEA-DIVIDED  
GAEL," COULD HAVE NO MORE  
FITTING PATRON THAN AN ENGLISH CARDINAL, WHO  
WATCHES WITH UNTIRING INTEREST AND PATERNAL AFFECTION THE  
PROGRESS OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC RACE  
THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE BRITISH EMPIRE, AND THE GREAT  
CONTINENT OF THE WEST.

*Grahamstown, South Africa, }*  
*January 12th, 1885. }*

## **Declaration.**

---

In all I have written in this book, I have been most careful, while endeavoring to popularize Catholic teaching, to keep strictly to the doctrines of the Church, and to the Definitions and Expositions of the successors of St. Peter, charged by our Divine Lord to confirm the faith of the brethren. Should I have erred, however, in any points, I submit my involuntary mistakes to the judgment and correction of the Holy See.

✠ J. D. RICARDS, EP. and VIC. AP.

## PREFACE.

---

I HAVE called this book "Aletheia" rather than "The Truth," because there is more in the Greek word than is conveyed in its English synonym applicable to my undertaking. I want not only to tell what I conscientiously believe to be the truth upon the most important subject that can possibly engage the attention of beings created for eternal life; but to tell it openly, and in a way that I hope will attract public attention. I wish most earnestly to bring what I have to say on the Catholic Rule of Faith into the open light, that it may have a chance of holding its own amongst the many new theories on religion which now attract the attention of the reading world.

I take to myself no credit for saying again what has been so much better said thousands of times over by really learned men: but I cannot help feeling that what the old Faith has to say for itself, must be said in a way that will fall in with the taste of the times. I would give anything I possess to write with the power and eloquence of those who fascinate the public in favor of modern theories of unbelief. Wanting in all but the desire to shine in this attractive light, I would at least, by my efforts to leave the well-beaten track of theological ponderosity, show how heartily I entered into the views of writers who maintain, that if religion is to have fair play, her cause must be pleaded in a fashion that

will not at any rate frighten, by its rigid precision, and alarming profundity, and copiousness of matter, those who may be disposed to hear what it has to offer to a generation tired of everything that is food for serious thought.

It must be apparent to every one who reads the leading magazines and reviews, that there is no place in them for the teaching of the venerable Catholic Church. This teaching is simply ignored ; and the impression naturally left on the public mind is that there is nothing to be added to "the old story." Those who write in the interests of the fashionable theories feel, as by a sort of instinct, that if they dwell for a moment on the conservative principles of Catholicism, they run the risk of shutting themselves out from any share of public attention ; and hence they write learnedly on the guesses of the scientists, without the least allusion to the doctrines of the old Church.

I have a hope that if, from the absence of any attempt to display scholastic learning, this book is looked through even cursorily, it may possibly help to revive the traditions of the faith : and by its circulation, which promises to be large, stimulate really gifted men to present religious food to the public, in a shape that may excite an appetite for religious teaching.

We already possess in the Catholic Church works on all branches of religion, that satisfy every demand of the learned and the studious. The supply of most valuable works on dogmatic and moral theology, filled with the wealth of patristic lore, and the almost inspired learning of renowned doctors, is superabundant. Theological students nowadays are much more favored in this respect than were those of the last generation. They who



can look back, thirty or forty years, to their college life will remember how difficult it was, at least in the British Isles and America and the Colonies, to secure able commentaries on the old masters, that applied sound principles to the affairs of present life. And now the treatises which are teeming from the press, create a veritable *embarras de richesse* which often perplexes and bewilders the student of theology.

Works of instruction and devotion in English abound, not only in Catholic lending libraries, but in the houses of Catholics of every degree who care to read, affording the faithful every information they can desire about Catholic doctrine and worship and practices. The pious and the seriously disposed read them with avidity; and I think it will not be asserting too much to say, that never, in the whole history of the Church, was there an age, in which the well-disposed body of English-speaking Catholics throughout the world, was better instructed than at present.

Still there is a want, a serious and grave want for the many, and that is works written on Catholic faith and doctrine that fall in with the spirit and taste of the times. Say what we will, "preach, exhort in season and out of season," men even of good will are influenced by the prevailing sentiment and fashion: they will not read what is generally considered dry and hard; and so for the great bulk of Catholics these books brimful of learning and piety, written with admirable precision and care, are a dead letter.

It is a truism to say that there is no use in a book if it is not read: but, in the practical experience of the world, it is a fact that the very best books on religion are seldom opened by the great majority of Catholic laymen and

women. Ecclesiastics, religious, the pious and well disposed, who keep their hearts "undefiled from the world," revel in the rich repast prepared for them by Catholic writers of surpassing ability; but the crowd, who are drawn away by the example of a frivolous, thoughtless, and work-a-day society, care more for trashy literature which furnishes the ordinary topics of conversation, than for the wisdom of a St. Thomas or a St. Augustine, set generously before them in ever-multiplying translations and handy manuals.

The great want for the multitude is something that will suit the prevailing taste, arguments briefly and tersely put, illustrations that may amuse, principles intimated rather than laboriously built up on solid and unmistakable grounds, exhortations in the style of Thackeray, genial anecdotes, and now and then a burst of vigorous and glowing writing that will penetrate the soul, when it is as it were off its guard, and beguiled by the pleasing style, into something like interest and attention.

We may deplore that the generality of people have not more sense: but as St. Bernard used to say to his religious, when exhorting them on charitable patience with their brethren, and tenderness for their weaknesses,—  
"We must take people as they are, and not as we wish them to be."

This is the thought that I have tried always to keep before me in writing this book; and my only regret is that I have had neither the imagination, nor the power of mind, nor the varied learning, to carry out successfully the main view. Still I believe that what I have attempted is a step in the right direction; and I flatter myself that some will glance over the pages of "*Aletheia*,"

who would barely open one of the ablest books in our language that treated in the ordinary way religious and social questions.

I say so much in deprecation of severe criticism. I hope that my learned readers will take the will for the deed, and not "sit on me" too heavily. I wanted to write something that might be read by the general public, something that might be easily understood, and that might interest those who do not care for serious reading. I am convinced that the only way to success in my attempt was to aim at least as well as I could at consulting the prevailing sentiment. If I have failed, I must only take the blame on my poor abilities, certainly not on my want of earnestness and disposition to labor with all my might for so good a purpose.

I remember reading somewhere, I think in the *Dublin Review*, many years ago, that the success of men like Spurgeon, and Moody, and Sankey, in drawing enthusiastic crowds around them, was owing to the fact that they discarded "the pulpit twang." It was not certainly in any great power of unfolding original conceptions of the Divine message. There is more solid food for the hungry soul in an ordinary Catholic book of devotion, than in volumes of the sensational, often frothy, and sometimes slangy exhortations, of these popular preachers. I have read many of their sermons, picturing to myself the energy and tone and action of the speakers as I have heard them described; and contrasted them painfully with the ordinary lectures of a spiritual retreat, or the exhortations of a Catholic "mission." There were startling things no doubt forcibly expressed by the American preachers and the celebrated man who rules the Tabernacle; but I missed the overwhelming majesty of truth,

which awes and subdues into a lasting conversion those who in a good spirit assist at these devotional exercises in the Catholic Church.

These men, Moody and Sankey, and Spurgeon, simply accommodated their style to the popular taste. Gifted with a bright imagination, and prepared by careful study of human nature, and of nature in the wide universe, knowing well the habits and ways of the restless age, and able to express themselves readily as the ideas came, it is no wonder that thousands and tens of thousands listened to them with something like rapture. Instead of the solid divinity carefully built up on sound foundations, and divided into a multitude of points, each supported by proofs and multiplied texts of Scripture, and this delivered in a solemn tone with a rhythm peculiarly its own, these bold preachers rushed *in medias res*, seizing at once, in a business sort of way, on striking points, and smote and hacked at vice and folly with such untiring energy, that huge crowds listened with amazement, and believed themselves converted.

I do not think of proposing this peculiar style of popular preaching as a model for Catholic writers, who wish to have their works read by the general public. It would be hardly healthy reading, and might, if it kindled a glow of warm sentiment in the minds of the readers, be probably followed by dangerous reaction, and weariness and disgust. But I say, that this accommodation to popular taste, shows clearly what may be done, if those to whom God has given superior light and knowledge and earnest piety, will devote time and study and care to express the great truths of Catholicity in a way that will gratify the prevailing feeling. There can be nothing wrong in thus catering for the general public. It is only an application



of the practice of St. Paul towards "the little ones of Christ." "I gave you milk to drink, not meat." (1 Cor. iii. 2.)

If I claim for myself something original, or "uncommon" as the Americans would call it, in the conception of the book, this pretension will receive its full set-off in the poorness of the execution.

But the truths I have tried to announce in an original form are as old as Christianity. And why it may naturally be asked do I press them on the attention of the public now? Is it to stir up discord, and to trouble consciences that are quite satisfied with the old ways on which they have tramped peaceably onwards as their fathers did before them? Certainly not to excite anything like discord. Quarrels, dissensions and their terrible consequences are so vividly set before us by St. Paul, as some of the worst crimes that men can commit, that I could not wilfully set such an object before me without grievous sin. Such an idea must be revolting to any man whose mission it is to preach the gospel of Christian charity and love of brethren. If some Christian ministers fiercely denounce Papists, it is only because they hate the evil thing associated in their minds with Popery. But anything like stirring up strife and enmity and discord amongst brethren must be particularly revolting to one who feels that he is fast drawing near to the awful judgment, and on whose soul the shadows of the dread future are rapidly falling, obscuring, in their steadily growing length and depth, the vanities of this world.

It is that thought of the future, towards which so many millions are drifting recklessly and indifferently, and who are amusing their fancies with the wild dreams of incredulity, that has most of all urged me to say out

boldly and distinctly—that THERE IS BUT ONE TRUE FAITH, and that WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD.

Would that I might hope to trouble consciences which are at times uneasy and anxious about the necessary conditions to salvation! Then indeed the dread thought of having to give an account of my stewardship as a pastor of souls, would be less appalling: for we are assured by the inspired prophet, that—"They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Daniel xii. 3.)

If I could reasonably hope that the doctrine, conveyed in the way I have marked out for myself might, through the Divine mercy, stir up those who sleep the heavy sleep of indifference, and dream listlessly the dreams of imagination about God and the future, "to labor for the one thing necessary"—I might console myself with the belief that their justice would plead for me with a merciful Redeemer, and thus enable me to "stand with great constancy" (Wisdom v. 1) in the presence of the Judge.

But I know too well the overwhelming power of prejudices to indulge much in hopes of this kind. Possibly a few earnest souls, fixing their attention on the learned and distinguished thinkers of this age, whom I quote so frequently in this book—Cardinals Manning and Newman—may be led to follow their example, and like them, to give up all things to do the blessed will of God.

Certainly there never was a period since the days of the revolt in the sixteenth century, when what Cardinal Newman calls the great traditionary lie against the Church of God was more subdued than it is at present. Thoughtful men are watching too anxiously the desolating effects of free-thought and its probable consequences, to trouble themselves much about the old calumnies associated with antichrist and the scarlet woman. Popery and the

abominations is not now the appetizing morsel it used to be—"the Cheshire cheese of parsons," as Sydney Smith calls it, just the thing to relieve the inward man after a heavy meal of sapless divinity. People of ordinary reading don't care for it now, unless it receives a peculiar flavor from highly spiced narrative.

The question of the day seems to be narrowing itself, in all lands to this one point. Shall we believe in the Divine authority of the Infallible Church, or shall we adopt the irresistible consequence of free-thought, and plunge headlong into Rationalism and Agnosticism? It is evident to all such minds that mere human authority, substituted for the voice of God and His everlasting Church, and the religion of sentiment and pious feeling, will not prevail in the conflict between belief and unbelief, that is every year becoming more imminent.

One who ponders deeply on the signs of the times would be almost forced to the conviction that the period of "the great revolt" is not far distant, when those who deny Christ, and despise His ordinances shall know Him no more, and shall be found in the ranks of His eternal enemies.

If men would only *think* on these most grave and serious matters—think calmly, and with minds free from angry prejudice and passion and the pride of life, and the desperate resolve to perish forever rather than look in the direction of hateful Popery, a better day might even yet dawn for humanity than it has known for many hundred years; and out of the heavy clouds and darkness, that are fast settling down on this unfortunate world might rise again the sun of peace and love and brotherhood.

The senseless cry of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" and the Utopian schemes of socialism and com-

munism would then find a true meaning in a united Christendom, and men would behold with admiration the realization of the dream of the just Hebrew who mourned over what appeared to him the inevitable ruin of his people, and was afterwards gladdened by their marvellous delivery. "That was a day of darkness and danger," says the inspired writer of the book of Esther,—“a day of tribulation and distress and great fear upon the earth,” when Mardochai, the wealthy and powerful Jew of Susan, seemed to hear in his dream “voices and tumults and thunders and earthquakes”—“as the two great dragons came forth ready to fight one against the other.”—“And the nation of the just was troubled fearing their own evils, and was prepared for death. And they cried to God: and as they were crying, a little fountain grew into a very great river and abounded with many waters. The light and the sun rose up, and the humble were exalted, and they devoured the glorious.” (Esther xi. 5-11.)

If men would only think and pray, then this great conflict between Infidelity and Christianity might be in part averted, or the “time of the fierce struggle shortened on account of the elect;” and the simple ways of God’s merciful Providence might change again the face of the world.

This is my hope, this is my main intention in opening the little fountain of my thoughts. May God keep this intention “lightsome” before me at all times! And then whether success or failure attends my feeble efforts, whether the spring will close through neglect, or by the labors of others more gifted than I, abound in many waters, the whole body will be lightsome, and pleasing in the eyes of Him who shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. (Rom. ii. 16.)



# CONTENTS.

---

CHAPTER	PAGE
Dedication, . . . . .	3
Preface, . . . . .	5
Introduction, . . . . .	17
I. Necessity of Revelation, . . . . .	37
II. The True Sense of Revelation cannot be determined by the Bible alone, . . . . .	53
III. Private Judgment: what it really means, . . . . .	74
IV. Vagaries of Private Judgment, . . . . .	90
V. Reasonable Faith and Non-Catholic Credulity, . . . . .	109
VI. "The Pride of Life," . . . . .	130
VII. Faith, . . . . .	150
VIII. Hope, . . . . .	165
IX. Charity, . . . . .	182
X. Authoritative Teaching outside the Catholic Church, . . . . .	195
XI. General Views of Infallibility: what it is and what it is not, . . . . .	213
XII. The Infallibility of the Catholic Church, . . . . .	229
XIII. Infallibility of the Pope, . . . . .	248
XIV. Application of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility to the Immaculate Conception, . . . . .	266
XV. "Modern Romish Corruptions" and Development under the Guidance of the Spirit of Truth, . . . . .	282
Conclusion, . . . . .	298



## INTRODUCTION.

---

“WHAT is truth?” So said Pilate to Christ when, from the few words addressed to him by the great Teacher, the idea of a “kingdom not of this world” flashed upon his astonished soul, and for a moment obscured his ambitious cravings after earthly power and the friendship of Cæsar. It was the Divinity that stirred within the haughty Roman when he found himself in the presence of Him who said “Let light be,” and caused the involuntary sigh that rose from his troubled bosom to find expression in words that indicated “a longing after immortality.” But the passing impulse, while it impressed him with the innocence and august character of the accused, did not leave behind it the sense of responsibility which belonged to his high office. Pilate condemned Him in whom he could “find no cause” to a cruel death; and while he washed his hands, vainly hoping by this ceremony to cleanse his soul from the awful guilt of judicial murder, he cast away forever the grace that might have saved him. The sad fate of the unhappy Prætor brings vividly before me the case of too many who, awed and amazed at the calm unchanging attitude of the Catholic Church amid the revolutions and uprisings of society, are forced to say within themselves, “Perhaps the Church might be able to satisfy our doubts and perplexities about the truth;” and can scarcely resist the im-

pulse which prompts them to interrogate her : but who, even while their lips are expressing the burning thought, allow prejudices and the spirit of the world to carry them beyond the reach of her answer. There is no thoughtful man who, from the circumstances of his position and surroundings, has been led to fix his eyes on the Catholic Church but must have felt the almost irresistible impulse to question her about the great problem of eternal life. No matter how loud and fierce may be the outcry of her enemies, proclaiming her imagined enormities and clamoring for her destruction, the thought must have often suggested itself to him : If there is truth to be obtained in this world concerning the dark future, she at least might tell me something that can be relied upon as certain. Of course I know that the great mass of mankind, who are completely absorbed in the affairs of this world, never heed the Church except when it comes in the way of their business, or its teaching clashes with their pet theories of material progress or social happiness. Just as Pilate said to our Divine Lord, "Am I a Jew?" so might they be supposed to say, if the position or claims of the Church were obtruded on their attention, "What have we to do with the Church? or what do we care about the teaching of this Church which almost ignores the only matters worthy the attention of rational human beings? Are we, like superstitious and weak-minded dolts, to trouble ourselves about shadows, when every moment of our precious time is little enough to enable us to fight our way through the stern realities that surround us?"

I do not mean to say that such as these concern themselves even about the possibility of supernatural truth and the objects of Faith. They always wear the eager expression of the crowds one meets with in the heart of

huge London, who are ever hurrying onward, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and who would hardly stop to gaze upwards if the proximate signs of the day of doom were manifesting themselves in the skies.

I speak of men who, though heartily set on the acquisition of wealth and honor and position, have not yet been transformed into mere machines for the working out of elaborate calculations on the rise and fall of the funds, and financial schemes of all-absorbing interest, and who only slacken speed to throw in the necessary supplies, or shut off steam to oil or polish, in a hurried holiday, the overworked organism which is the vehicle of their anxious thoughts. But there are many steeped in wordliness who, notwithstanding the attractions of the present ever-varying scene, feel at times a real interest in the great question of immortality. They love the world and the things that are in the world, it is true, but a sort of instinct superior to sense, though uninformed by Faith, teaches them, like the philosophers of paganism, that they shall never die.

Men of this class are superior to the temptations which, under the guise of scientific theories, amuse the fancy of the giddy multitude. They feel, sometimes at least, that they have been created for a nobler purpose than to wallow in sensuality, and to perish like the unreasoning animal or the flower of the field, and they are convinced that man, who, by his natural powers of mind, can read the great book spread out before us in this vast universe, may somehow or other catch a glimpse of the Infinite Author, and of the end for which He has called into existence beings made to His own image and likeness. To such as these the guesses of the scientists of our day are only amusing specimens of flights of the imagination. They

are too wise and too serious to attach any importance to these airy nothings beyond the passing pleasure which this ingenious and original style of reasoning and fine writing naturally excites in minds formed by education and cultivated taste to relish the article. Their common-sense revolts at the bare idea of mere triflers in theology, presuming on their knowledge of physical science to improve on the teaching of the Gospel. If they have not studied very attentively the life of Christ and the history of Christianity, they know enough to convince them that no man ever spoke like Him, or effected so marvellous a revolution in the thoughts and feelings and purposes and actions of mankind. They really desire to know something definite and trustworthy about the future life which may give a fixed direction to their most grave thoughts, and may sustain their hopes when they shall be reduced to the sad but inevitable necessity of parting with everything they have loved and treasured here below. The simple question, "What is truth?" suggests to them even more than is generally dreamt of in their philosophy, and leads them into depths deeper far than ever formed the subject of their most recondite financial speculations.

The great point is, do they really care to find out, at the expense of time and meditation, a satisfactory answer to the doubts and fears that perplex them? They believe that they are thoroughly in earnest in their inquiries. The possible issues are too dreadful, they think, to allow them to be satisfied with any other than a sound conviction. But when they are met, at the very outset of their explorations, by the necessity of Faith in a Divine Revelation, when they are told, in the most learned Christian books, and by every teacher of Christianity to whom they apply for information, that they must believe in



certain dogmas which neither the most profound treatises nor the most eloquent preachers can explain, that they must receive on trust alone the very elements of this Faith, they experience an insurmountable difficulty in accepting the teaching. "Why," they exclaim, "should we, gifted with reason and common-sense, yield a blind submission to fallible men like ourselves, who candidly confess that they know no more than we do about the full meaning of the Divine message? There are matters contained in it of the highest possible significance. A child can understand them. There is a future life of eternal happiness or eternal misery set before us, mainly dependent on the good or bad use of the present life: but this is involved in mysteries which no mind can fathom. How then can we receive with undoubting assent these practical conclusions, when the premises are altogether hidden from our view? These books and teachers tell us of a God, the rewarder of virtue and the avenger of iniquity, who sees and 'notes down as in a book' all our thoughts and desires and actions; and yet these guides cannot explain satisfactorily the nature of this God, or how He knows all things, or why He should give Himself the trouble of perpetually watching us. What benefit is it to Him to consign some to eternal perdition, and to raise others to eternal happiness? This very eternity of joy or misery is in itself a mystery. It is easy to say 'for ever and ever;' but when we try to grasp duration without end, the mind breaks down hopelessly in the effort. How can any sort of happiness be without end, when we know by sad experience that the most perfect delights grow wearisome in their protraction? And as regards the torments of which you tell us, our very instincts rise up in abhorrence of anything so

inconceivably terrible. And this atonement—what does it mean? How could the great Being who has made all things suffer and die to redeem us? Where is the sense or reason of the All-Holy and Innocent suffering for the guilty? What is the Trinity of Persons, the same undivided nature—one the stern Upholder of an inflexible law, and another the Redeemer, and another perfectly distinct from each, the Sanctifier? If this mysterious book, to which you refer us, and which you say contains in its pages the infallible truth, tells us of things beyond the comprehension of the most gifted intelligence, may not what we consider the practical results of this system be also wrapt in mystery? May not the whole thing be an allegory—a dreamy mythology dimly perceptible perhaps to the Oriental imagination, but absurd and preposterous to the logical minds and the sound common-sense of these days of enlightenment?"

What shall I say to all these difficulties? Simply this: If you do not admit the authority of a living, speaking, and infallible guide, *they are absolutely unanswerable.*

No matter how conclusively we may prove the necessity of a Divine Revelation, and the fact that such a Revelation has been made, when there is question of interpreting and defining clearly and distinctly the Divine message, if we have not such a guide to teach us, the message from above cannot command the assent and entire conviction of reasonable men.

A few plain words will, I believe, establish this truth. The object of this book is only to develop it.

I do not mean to enter into learned disquisitions, but to treat the whole subject in a popular way.

For men of ordinary intelligence who really desire to know what is before them after death, even the brief ex-

planation of the point which I am about to set before the public in this Introduction might be sufficient. If, however, they will give themselves the trouble to push the inquiry farther, they may rely on my assurance that they will not be puzzled or confused by reading the following chapters. The entire matter is in a nutshell. Thousands and tens of thousands of books have been written on controverted points that affect the argument in its application, or, as the schoolmen say, *a posteriori*; but the principle is so plain and obvious *a priori*, or considered in itself, that I may say in reference to it what the Prophet has said about the teaching of the long-expected of nations. It will open to all who are in earnest in their inquiry after truth "a way in which not even fools may err." It is emphatically "*the* Way, the Truth, and the Life" for men of good will who look forward, after this transitory life, to a glorious immortality.

Supposing the necessity of a Divine Revelation, and the fact that such a Revelation has been made to the world,—points on which all Christians are agreed, but which I mean to prove in the first chapter for the satisfaction of unbelievers,—and supposing further that the substance of this Revelation is contained in the Bible, I contend that the mysterious truths therein set forth cannot reasonably be accepted unless we have an infallible guide to teach us the meaning that must necessarily be attached to the words of the Divine message. In other words, unless we have an infallible teacher living and speaking in our midst, and vested by God with authority to explain with unerring certainty the meaning of the written word inspired by Him, it is altogether unreasonable to ask any one to believe with the entire assent of the intellect whatever that Divine message contains, when the

words seem to convey a meaning that transcends our reason.

It seems to me that this contention is unassailable, and that it is so clear to common-sense as scarcely to need a proof.

As long as an infallible authority such as I have mentioned is rejected, and we are absolutely free to form our own opinion or judgment on a passage of the Bible that seems to convey a meaning beyond our comprehension, then I would say that it is our duty to try to find out another meaning that can be understood and which the words will bear.

The real ground of Faith in the Word of God is the absolute truth of God. Whatever He says must, from the very nature of an infinitely perfect Being, be absolutely true. God would cease to be God if He could deceive us. But when His inspired word seems to propose something that, in its nature, is beyond the capacity of the human mind, a grave doubt arises as to whether we have understood His words correctly. The presumption unquestionably is, supposing man left to his own unaided powers to determine the true meaning, in favor of a sense that recommends itself to reason. Take any of those mysteries which I have already mentioned as standing in the way of an earnest inquirer after truth,—the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the eternity of rewards and punishments,—and suppose that learned linguists assure us, as very many do, that the words will, in the original, and according to the generally received laws of grammar, bear a sense that is easily understood: we would be bound to prefer the intelligible to the incomprehensible. That the majority of Christians who are not Catholics have inclined the other way is owing,

not to their principles, but to the traditions of the Faith derived from the Church. The more faithfully these traditions have been preserved, either through a semblance of authoritative teaching, or through creeds and formularies, and rites, and prayers,—the property of the old Church,—the stronger will be their leaning to mysterious dogma. But when these links with the past are severed altogether, when sham authority is openly derided, and the craving after novelty has substituted forms of worship unknown to antiquity, then the claims of reason as opposed to mysticism begin to show themselves unmistakably and persistently. What more common nowadays than to hear men who have inherited or acquired a bitter hostility to everything in religion that bears the slightest resemblance to Catholicity, boast proudly, that they have shaken off the trammels of slavish superstition, and believe only what recommends itself to their reason and judgment? Who that not only denies but even ridicules the idea of an infallible human guide, when inspired by the abiding spirit of truth, can condemn those who make this boast? If there is no infallible guide, then, whatever may be believed or imagined concerning the inspiration of Scripture, the meaning attributed to this written record is merely a human opinion and no more. The opinion may have been suggested by the text: but where the text is confessedly susceptible of opposite and contradictory significations, the lesson or the dogma ascribed to the mute words is the outcome of fallible thought; and therefore cannot be forced on the conviction of any reasonable man.

It is all very well for those who are pressed with this argument to say that the sense which their particular denomination attaches to it is the correct one. They may



think so, no doubt, or otherwise they would not imperil their salvation by clinging to an interpretation which they conscientiously believe to be false. But let them clearly understand, that, after all, it is only one view, and that others conscientiously believe that their own view, which is diametrically opposed to the first, is the only one which they think deserves to be recognized as the teaching of God.

If there was unanimity amongst Christians on the fundamental mysteries of Revelation, there might be some semblance of reason in maintaining that what all agreed to receive as the word of God must be the very truth. But this apparently safe conclusion is only a shadow at most; for once the revealed word has been accepted, not because God has certainly declared it, but because fallible men have agreed to stamp it with their approval, it has been robbed of the substantial ground on which alone it could challenge and command the assent of Faith. Outside the Catholic Church, there is no dogma beyond the grasp of the finite intelligence of man that is not thus disputed, and reduced to the level of a mere human speculation. The Divinity of Christ, the very essence of Revealed Religion is, as it is well known, in this way deprived of every element of a supernatural character. Unitarians and Trinitarians may pity each other; but both, from a Catholic point of view, are equally deserving of compassion. Even the Trinitarian who believes with the Catholic Church, that there are three persons really distinct in the Divine nature, and that Christ is God, is no better, as regards Divine Faith, than his learned opponent who scoffs at the idea of anything which appears to him so monstrous and incredible. And the reason is, that by cutting himself off from the living



infallible teacher, he has no means of knowing with certainty what God has actually taught, and consequently cannot build his belief on the only basis of supernatural Faith, the veracity of the great Being who he thinks has revealed this mystery. It is often said that there are many Protestants who call themselves Catholics, who believe nearly every dogma believed by the Catholic Church, and that therefore they are to all intents and purposes genuine Catholics. But this is a great mistake. Supposing they really did believe every article in the Catholic creed except, say, the supremacy of the Vicar of Christ on earth, their faith would improperly be called Faith, because they do not believe these truths on the only ground on which real Faith can rest. They may have gleaned their belief, with laborious and painstaking industry, from the writings of the saints and Fathers of the primitive Church; but every article of their creed is as different from the Faith of these venerable witnesses of the truth, as are the wild and fanciful surmises of a Jules Verne compared with the mathematical precision of astronomers like Leverrier or the sound principles of Newton. It is time that all this dilettanteism in religion, this application of æsthetic tastes to the direction of conscience, this aping at mere ceremonial however venerable in its antiquity and however sanctified by real objective Faith, should be estimated at its proper value. I do not find fault with the frivolities of fashion, as long as they are restrained by a sense of moral purity and self-respect. People may wear sunflowers, or the blossom of the *Protea grandiflora*, on their bosoms, or if they are so inclined, and the inexorable laws of correct taste, as interpreted by the modistes and professors of the Oscar Wilde type, will have it so, they may wear cauliflowers,

or cabbages for that matter, on their heads for anything I care. Of course I could not help feeling sorry that any one I cared for would make himself or herself ridiculous. It is fashion, ever-changing and capricious fashion, that regulates all these things; and there is no pretense to any higher law. This has its uses, and when people have so far overcome their fear of ridicule as to yield a blind obedience to a despotic rule of this kind, they are giving an impulse to languishing trade, and encouraging honest industry that might, without this stimulus, pine away and perish. But if the devotees of fashion were to advance claims to a higher sanction than this petty tyrant can urge to frighten tender susceptibilities, and quote Scripture, and enlist the Divine Wrath on their side, and try in this way to compel the acquiescence of society to their dictation, it would be scarcely necessary for the preacher to accentuate the indignation of public opinion against such an abuse of power.

This may seem trifling with a grave subject; but it seems to me that a sharp whack of the lath of ridicule is the best way to direct attention to the absurdity of attempting to mould and determine the creeds and forms of worship by individual views of the fitness of things, as opposed to the clear teaching of legitimate authority. If they who undertake to rule consciences with a despotism which even an infallible guide would not assume, will only speak the truth and say to their disciples, "This is our view, this is, as far as we can judge, the correct thing," then their position will be understood; and if good people are disposed to pay the same deference to the *ipse dixit* of these guides, as the multitude show to fashion, who would care to find fault either with the self-conceit of the teachers or the docility of their subjects?

Men are opening their eyes more and more every day to the true nature of this assumption of Divine authority in the determination not only of the forms of worship, but of dogma. When the authority established by Jesus Christ is treated with contempt, and when men who are not Catholics substitute for the infallible voice of the Vicar of Christ their own interpretation of God's written word, and attempt to bind down those who listen to them by blind obedience, as if they were absolutely certain of the true meaning of the written word, sensible and thoughtful observers see plainly that this assumed authority is only human, and soon begin to cry out plainly that the credulity of the public must not be imposed upon by unreal names.

There was a dispute, in July 1884, in the Wesleyan Conference held at Burslem on an important dogma of revealed religion—the nature of punishment in a future state. A Mr. Frankland, a reverend gentleman of high character and long service in this communion, expressed views on this subject which rather startled the other members of the conference. Some were of opinion that he should retire from the ministry, as his views were unconstitutional. When, after a warm discussion, he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and went on, notwithstanding interruption, in defending his position, Dr. Osborne put the case fairly. He said that it was not a question as between men and the New Testament, but between them and their standards of belief. They were Wesleyans, and Wesleyans on the distinct acceptance of the Wesleyan standard interpretations of Scripture. In other words, he maintained, we have made up our minds to accept a defined but fallible interpretation, or the opinions which the founders of the sect had agreed

amongst themselves to accept. "We must be content," he said, "to meet the charge that we are following the teaching of a man, rather than that of the New Testament;" and concluded by moving that Mr. Frankland, being no longer obedient to this human teaching, which was the only ground for their existence as a distinct religious body, should cease to be a member. Mr. Frankland, however, was not excommunicated or expelled, but merely requested, as long as he remained a Wesleyan minister, not to propound his views in public or private, in pulpit or in press, or say anything further about his own personal convictions on the all-important subject of the sanction of the Divine law. Here is a distinct and clear admission, that it is not Revelation which guides the religious views of this respectable body of Christians, but a mere human interpretation of the meaning of God's written word; and that no individual member of that association has a right, however strong may be his faith in the individual guidance of the Holy Spirit, to propound views that are not in accordance with the decided and fixed opinions of his brethren in the ministry. What a comment on the hard things which are so constantly stated publicly against the Church, as if she, like the Pharisees of old, incurred the wrath of God for "teaching doctrines and precepts of men"! (Mark vii. 7.) When Daniel O'Connell called attention, many years ago, to the glaring discrepancy between the avowed right of individual judgment and the despotic definitions of the Wesleyan Conference, he gave great offence to those who conscientiously believed, notwithstanding his proofs to the contrary, that their faith was founded, not on human teaching at all, but on the very Word of God Himself. Still the fact is clear.

This large association of Christians, whose shibboleth is "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," follows, after all, "human precepts and human teaching;" and every minister of that body who refuses to bow down before the fallible and uncertain definitions of this authority must either close his lips as to his own convictions when they are in conflict with it—or resign his position and his salary.

This is precisely the point I want to emphasize in this Introduction, and which I hope to bring out more fully in the subsequent chapters. A Revelation that is confined to a book, and which therefore does not explain itself, is no Revelation at all, as far as its practical effects on the mind of sound-thinking believers are concerned. If there exists not an infallible guide, divinely commissioned, and guided by the spirit of truth, to explain it to us, we are in the same position as the Ethiopian who was converted to the faith by the teaching of the Deacon Philip. This man was asked by the Deacon if he could understand what he was reading in the Old Testament: and he replied,—“How can I, unless some one show me?” (Acts viii. 31.) The Deacon then, acting on the commission given him by the Church to teach the meaning of the written word, explained the prophetic words of Isaias. The happy convert was in this way, through the ministry of Philip, brought into communication with the Word of God, and believed with Divine Faith, and was baptized and made a member of the one fold.

It is useless for those who resist the authority which our Divine Lord appointed to teach us “all things,” and who, notwithstanding the dread consequence of being excluded from a share in the Divine promises, refuse “to hear the Church,” to contend that they are individually



guided in their interpretation of Scripture by a special inspiration. Arguments upon arguments and books upon books have been piled up, since the great revolution against Church authority, to establish this point. Time was when, in spite of glaring facts, this was piously believed by many. But the exuberant language of pious emotion is powerless in its conflict with the matter-of-fact spirit of the present age. Whatever the faults of this age may be in its contempt for God's Revelation, it reasonably and rightly insists that things shall be called by their real names, and that whatever has the appearance of a sham shall be rigidly and inexorably tested. A short answer is fatal to this pious assumption of individual guidance of the spirit for the correct understanding of the written word. Even if certain isolated texts could be adduced to prove that there was ground for this belief, they are deprived of all force by the positive command to hear and obey the teachers who received a divine mission to preach the Gospel to every creature; and to transmit this mission of teaching all things that Christ revealed "to faithful men fit to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2) to the consummation of the world.

And if this is not enough to scatter the pretensions of individual guidance to the winds, there is another short and easily intelligible argument which utterly annihilates them. *Contra factum non licet argumentari*. It is an axiom in sound reasoning, that no man can argue against a fact. And one of the most patent facts in the history of the Christian world is that the divisions of Christians, who rely on individual inspiration, are the great scandal of the Christian name. Faith is one and indivisible, and the spirit of truth cannot by any possibility be the source of this Babel of confusion and contradiction.



From what I have so briefly stated, a fair idea can be formed of the scope of this book. It is meant to prove that true Faith in God's word is impossible, unless we have a living guide to explain its meaning with infallible certainty.

Without such a guide, the written words of the Bible, though they cover the inspired teaching of the God of all truth, cannot give Life everlasting. "The letter killeth." They who will not hear the speaking guide appointed to interpret, and expound, and preach the Divine message, and persist in their obstinacy, have every reason to fear the fate of "the unlearned and the unstable who wrest the sacred Scriptures to their own perdition" (2 Pet. iii. 16).

I believe that any intelligent Christian, who is not hopelessly blinded by prejudice, can understand without difficulty the argument as I have put it.

This argument, viewed in itself and *a priori*, is, I maintain, unanswerable and unassailable. If the Word of God has to reach us by the teaching of a guide who is not infallible, it is not the Word of God at all. There can be no certainty whatever about it. It is a mere human notion, working out the doctrine which it supposes is contained in the letter of the Bible.

When this written word is supposed to express some truth beyond the reach of human intelligence, and there can be no certain assurance on this point, then the presumption should naturally be that it has another meaning which possibly may commend itself to our judgment. This manifestly humanizes, if I may so express it, all that is Divine in the Record: and they who reject the promised infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit ever existing in the Church can rest their quasi-faith only on the weak and perishable support of human speculation.

I know of course that there is scarcely a limit to what has been said on the argument in its application. It has been pointed out in books innumerable, that the Catholic Church, posing as an infallible guide, has actually erred and contradicted herself, and done all sorts of wicked things that positively render her unfit to teach us the meaning of the written word of God ; that Councils even have erred ; nay, more : that nearly the whole body of believers, the taught as well as the teachers, have been, for ages even, hopelessly sunk in the most abominable errors. Such things, I admit, have been *said*, and urged with remarkable power of language and semblance of probability by those whose only *raison d'être* is this supposed wickedness and scandalous error. All I would answer, either here or in the course of the book, on a point so much controverted is simply this: These assertions have been fully met and satisfactorily answered, till one is weary of the repeated and overwhelming mass of evidence heaped together on the Catholic side. They are expressly contrary to the plain promises of the Founder of Christianity, that the Church established by Him as “the pillar and ground of truth” should be always, even to the end of the world, guided by the Holy Ghost, and His own abiding presence in the office of teaching that Faith which He has declared to be necessary for salvation (Mark xvi. 16).

To enter ever so briefly into this part of the argument would only serve the same purpose that these cleverly written, millions I may say, of wordy treatises have effected since the Reformation, and are effecting at this present time of sore disquiet and unrest and almost hopeless inquiry after truth,—to advance the work of the powers of hell, and to throw dust in the eyes of earnest and sincere inquirers.

The grand point is this. Without an infallible teacher there cannot be imagined such a thing as Divine, calm, and unwavering Faith. Without such a guide there cannot exist unbounded trust in the Divine message; and the old Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, is the only Church in Christendom that claims now persistently, as she did from the beginning, to be guided in her interpretation of the Deposit of the Faith—the written and unwritten Word of God—by the spirit of unchangeable and everlasting truth. There is no other Church or denomination in the world that dares to advance for itself a claim of this kind. If any one, amongst the hundreds of sects that profess to teach the meaning of the written Word of God, claimed for itself the privilege of performing this office with unerring certainty, it would, by this assumption, convict itself of the terrible crime of rising up in rebellion against the teacher authorized and directed at all times by Christ Himself.

It is a fearful thing for those who are not Catholics, and who understand the force of the simple argument as I have put it, to ponder on these words of our Divine Lord, addressed to the first teachers of His law, and in them to their legitimate successors, in the work of teaching: “He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent me.” (Luke x. 16.)

If any non-Catholics will be moved by what I have written here, or by the contents of this book, to say to “the everlasting Church,”—“What is truth?” Heaven grant that they may ask the question with more earnestness and more real desire to receive an answer than did the unhappy Pilate, who by renouncing and condemning the great Teacher for the sake of the world filled up the

measure of his iniquities. They who sin against truth and the holy spirit of truth, by refusing obstinately or with culpable indifference to hear the Voice of the Church, which is the Divinely appointed channel of its communication for all time, are, according to the Apostle, guilty of a crime like that of the unfortunate Roman Prætor—because, by their rebellion or their sin against the Holy Ghost, “they crucify again to themselves the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him” (Heb. vi. 6).

# ALETHEIA.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### Necessity of Revelation.

IT is recorded that the last words of Goethe were "More light." The German Shakespeare, like his "many-sided" English compeer in the realm of fancy, had such exalted visions of the spiritual world that we may believe his expiring cry was addressed not, as many of his admirers would fondly imagine, to a senseless energy, but to the personal God who is the Light of the World. One can easily understand this dying outburst of a great mind when he pictures to himself the worse than Cimmerian darkness with which the intellectual ferment of the latter part of the eighteenth century had obscured supernatural religion. No wonder this philosopher, who, as Madame de Staël says, represents in himself alone the whole literature of a nation distinguished amongst all others for the depth and sublimity of its metaphysical studies, should, as this world was fading from his view, have, by a last effort, expressed his ardent longing for even one ray to guide his soul through the mazes of an eternal existence.\* The last desire of Goethe

---

\* The following extract from the memoirs of Goethe, taken from a charming little book,—*"Einsiedeln in the Dark Wood,"*—will be in-

has ever been the day-dream of really gifted minds who, by the circumstances of time, or association, or over-confidence in their natural abilities, have known nothing certain about their Divine Creator, or the end for which He called them into existence. They "shuddered at destruction." The gloomy and overwhelming desolation involved in annihilation of personal existence after death sat upon their souls like a hideous nightmare, and evoked these involuntary sighs that betrayed their irresistible longing after the light of immortality. When I read, some years ago, in the life of Mary Somerville, that this wonderfully gifted woman, who, in her extreme old age, when she was confined to bed and no longer able to work, amused her waking hours with the solution of problems in the higher mathematics, had such a dread of the dark world beyond the grave that she, with all her strength of mind, could not bear for a moment to be left alone, I seemed to realize more than ever the priceless gift of certain and undoubting Faith. Mary Somerville was a Christian, but not a Catholic. I have spoken with some who knew her intimately, and who bore testimony to her

---

teresting to Catholic readers: "The antique dwelling of St. Meinrad" (where the church of Our Lady of the Hermits now stands at Einsiedeln) "appeared to me something extraordinary of which I had never seen the like. The sight of the little building, surrounded by great pillars and surmounted by arches, excited in me serious reflections. It is there that one single spark of holiness and the fear of God kindled a flame which is always burning, and which has never ceased to give light; a flame to which faithful souls make a pilgrimage, often attended with great difficulties, in order to kindle their little taper at its holy flame. It is such a circumstance as this which makes us understand that the human race stands in infinite need of the same light and the same heat which the first anchorite who inhabited this spot nourished and enjoyed in the depths of his soul, animated as it was by the most perfect faith."



noble and blameless character; and yet she said to her constant attendant, "Hold my hand when you see me passing away, that I may not, while I am in this mortal body, feel the desolation of going forth alone into the awful darkness." What would she have given then for that light of Faith, which a well-trained and powerful intellect can find only in the certain knowledge of what God has taught! No mere glimmerings and fitful flashes of sickly flame, kept alive by emotional sentiment, can satisfy those who have learned betimes to mature and develop the powers of reason. If they could be brought, not by imagination, but by the plain and positive means established by our Divine Saviour to help our weak endeavors after truth, into the presence of God, then would they believe without doubt or hesitation, and go forth out of this world with joy and gladness into life eternal.

It is so well known that the illustrious thinkers of old pagan times, though by the exercise of their natural abilities they had risen far above the follies and puerilities of idolatry, needed a Divine and supernatural light to guide them to a certain knowledge of one Supreme Being, that it would be useless to dwell here on their vagaries and inconsistencies, and their hopeless efforts to satisfy either themselves or those who looked up to them for instruction on this all-important subject. They were wise in their own conceit even when they ardently wished for light, and so missed the only way—the path of humble prayer—that would have led them to the knowledge of truth. It is almost incredible into what unwholesome depths they wandered, and into what shameful and repulsive vices they fell, while they eagerly pursued the *ignes fatui* which pride conjured up before them. The glimpse which St. Paul gives us of their degradation

in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is quite sufficient to set before the mind of any one but a blind worshipper of humanity, the wretched perversity of fallen man when left to his own unaided powers, and to the temptations from within and without as often as, wrapt in the self-conceit of his intellectual gifts, he turns away from the Author of these gifts, and shuts his eyes to the evidence of almighty power and wisdom manifested in the visible universe.

Without heeding these proofs of the necessity of Revelation derived from the consideration of past times, we can learn this lesson from a glance at what is passing before the eyes of the present generation.

There are few great thinkers deserving the name of philosophers in the busy frivolous world of to-day. Physical science and its wonders form the *ne plus ultra* of the savants of the declining years of the nineteenth century. This study seems to them to constitute "the be-all and the end-all" of existence; and if some of the leaders of modern thought attempt to theorize on the discoveries and inventions which strike the minds of the crowd with amazement, it is soon apparent that they are lost in a confusion of absurdities and glaring blunders. Whatever tends to prolong healthy animal life, and to avert disease is the *crème de la crème* of social science. Next comes the study of the arts that delight the eye and ravish the ear, and foster the concupiscence of the flesh, and ease, and comfort, and bodily enjoyment for a few short fleeting years. Music, painting, poetry, the drama seem to have lost the spirit which animated them in the ages of Faith, and which fed the soul, elevated above the groveling things of earth, with visions, and sounds, and pure and happy thoughts of Heaven. The multitude, whose

tastes and mental capabilities are of an inferior order, set their hearts on the acquisition of wealth. And these tastes and these pursuits constitute the higher life of culture, that seems the object of the aspirations of the genius and talent which scorn the simplicity and docility and humility of Catholic morality. What can be more evident to one who contemplates the aims and objects and pursuits of these gay triflers, than that a light from above is absolutely necessary to overpower, by its splendor, these glow-worm lamps which at best only amuse the idle fancy of the thoughtless, or suggest to the serious the shadows that hang round the silent and hopeless tomb? "Silly moths!" must the Christian philosopher exclaim, "how easily are you lured to destruction by these evanescent charms that glitter in the dim phosphorescent lustre of a life of voluptuous pleasure, and how quickly do you sicken and die and perish everlastingly!" One is reminded by this sad spectacle of the words which the poet attributes to the Peri:

" 'Poor race of men!' said the pitying spirit,  
    ' Dearly ye pay for your primal fall;  
Some flowrets of Eden ye still inherit,  
    But the trail of the serpent is over them all.' "

Physical science and the study of nature are charming no doubt, and one might call them and the pursuits that foster and develop refined tastes, and "wake the soul by gentle strokes of art, and raise the genius and amend the heart"—flowrets of Heaven. But when these pretty flowrets poison and deaden the supernatural sense of Faith, and render it incapable of relishing these higher and purer enjoyments which are the most precious heritage of believers in a better life, they are fraught with the blighting curse of a death that knows no hope.

No one will I think for a moment accuse me of attempting to disparage scientific pursuits that tend to ameliorate "the ills all flesh is heir to." If the spirit and intention of noble students like Pasteur and others, who devote their lives to the grand object of averting disease, were only purified and exalted by the lessons of Revealed Religion; if men of this stamp saw in the suffering neighbor the image of Christ who wept tears of blood over the miseries of humanity, they would be walking in the very footsteps of Him who passed along during His stay on earth "doing good." If the all but inspired children of poesy and song, and those who reveal on canvas or in marble their wondrous visions of the beautiful, would only rise to the perception of that beauty which is ever "fresh and ever young," and endeavor to elevate the thoughts and feelings of their admirers to some ideal far beyond the charms of voluptuous sense, they might thus accomplish the office of angels, and become "messengers of God" to less favored mortals. By their works, conceived and carried out in this spirit they would, with a power often greater than that of the preacher, enkindle love and reverence for the All-Holy, and gather round them worshippers after God's own heart. But when Faith is wanting, all their splendid gifts seem, if not actually perverted to the service of the eternal enemy of God, at best only to soothe or remove a passing pain or evil that disturbs our comfort, or to awaken sensations that help us to forget for a moment or two the sad realities of this weary world.

But what shall I say of the learned thinkers of our day, of those who profess to be the prophets and the guides of the present generation? When we look to the outcome of their philosophy, I think there can be no

more striking proof of the absolute necessity of Revelation than is afforded by their aimless, fruitless, and silly theories. If the philosophers of Greece and Rome, the wise men of antiquity who are and ever will be the admiration of men capable of appreciating profound thought, wandered away so egregiously from the truth which even a Christian child may learn from the Catechism, what shall be said of the unreasoning and unreflecting fancies of modern genius? I fear the flashes of a bright and exuberant imagination and the bold and reckless guesses of the clever men of our time are often mistaken for real wisdom. Many of the most gifted of these, wrapt up in their own conceit, and closing their eyes to the proofs of a first intelligent cause and a personal God, assure us for our comfort that we belong to the monkey species, or that our ancestors must have sprung from "slugs and snails or puppy-dogs' tails."

I was amused lately by reading, in a review of the Introduction to "Catholic Christianity," that I had made a great mistake in attributing the growing infidelity to the want of serious thought. I was assured dogmatically by the learned writer, that this age was, on the contrary, remarkable for the deep attention paid by our illustrious writers and lecturers to the great problems of existence. It seems to me, watching carefully the drift of all this fine writing and learned talking, that one might learn more real wisdom from the sound reflections and practical piety of a good Christian however humble in position and destitute of even one atom of scientific lore, than from the concentrated splendor of a whole galaxy of these stars forever wandering in the regions of unbounded speculation. I really think that even a poor ignorant old woman who had learned to say her beads devoutly,



meditating, as she mechanically numbered them, on the striking scenes in the life of our Divine Lord, would be quite competent to pass a sound judgment on the results of this so-called philosophy. If I asked her what she thought of learned men who made it appear that we all grew originally out of limpids or cockles or periwinkles, and that we were not created at all, but grew up like mushrooms, and that there was no God who took care of us and would one day call us to a strict account for our thoughts, words, and actions,—if I did not quite take her breath away by the bare enunciation of this folly, she would clasp her hands in horror at such blasphemy, bow down to the very ground in reparation for the insult offered to the majesty of God, and perhaps exclaim, “Great Father in heaven, forgive these foolish children, for they know not what they say.”

I sometimes picture to myself a St. Thomas Aquinas or a St. Augustine present at a congress of our cultured scientists, and fancy what these giants of intellect would think of nineteenth-century wisdom. The lives of these saints were spent in gathering together every grain of knowledge to be found in the writings of the learned pagans. They carefully sifted out the smallest atoms of useful information, the fruit of past experience. They purified these precious things in the laver supplied by the sacred Scriptures—adorned and polished them with the teaching of the saints and Fathers, set them in the decisions of Councils—and then presented them with becoming reverence and humility as their offering to the Church of God. They had patiently acquired, in the school of the cross, the lesson of real humility; and, consequently, if the unerring eye of the Church discovered flaws and imperfections in these treasures, won



by them with infinite labor, they submitted at once to its infallible judgment. There is no trace to be found in the writings of real men like these of the contentious moroseness and savage ill-humor and sharp incisive bitterness which mark the excited self-love of little minds. "*Roma locuta est, res finita est.*" The Church inspired and directed by the Holy Ghost has decided, when God speaks man must be silent.

Perhaps it is wrong for me to imagine that saints could be amused at even the puerilities of conceit; but I could not help seeing in my mind's eye, the pitying smile which would involuntarily diffuse itself over the venerable features of these great Doctors of the divine law, as they listened to a lecture on spontaneous generation, or the germination of the protoplasm, or the mechanism of the soul, or the fortuitous evolution of order and beauty from the action of an unconscious, blind, and material energy. Even people of ordinary shrewdness who have never studied an elementary treatise on theology are tickled into "unextinguishable laughter," as, in amusing themselves with the antics of an ugly baboon, they are told that the wise men of these latter times have demonstrated to their own satisfaction, that this hideous-looking and malicious brute was their own blood-relation, and gravely argued that ancestors more repulsive still were intimately connected by ties of consanguinity with the whole human family.

Had the laughter-loving observer read some of the advanced books of the period, and taken up the notions about "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest," he might be tempted to express his wonder that the first evolved human being had not finished off altogether a race which would, as long as it existed,

recall unpleasant and humiliating memories of the past.

Some very amusing things have certainly been written on this interesting subject. For example, the simple means by which we may trace back in the ordinary gestures and movements of the features of human beings of all nations, the old habits of hair-covered and monstrously savage-looking cousins, is most taking and suggestive. I was once, many years ago, very near getting myself into a serious scrape by allowing myself to be seriously interested in this captivating theory. An old friend, who could say rather sharp things when he was provoked, had a striking habit of uncovering his right eye-tooth, when he was about to cut one to the bone with a more than ordinarily sharp sarcasm or reproach. I was the unhappy victim on one occasion, but such was my admiration for the theory, thus strikingly brought out in a moment, that, regardless of the coming lash or the probable consequences of my temerity, I exclaimed, "Bless me, you do remind me so of what Professor Darwin says!" Though the involuntary exclamation and the genuineness of the surprised look turned aside for the time the intended infliction, I fear the wrath was rather intensified in its ferocity, when asked for an explanation and, afraid to say anything about a baboon, I mentioned the habit of the wild boar preparing for attack and the baring of the eye-tooth in an angry man—as a sign of near propinquity.

I do not mention this merely for the fun of the thing, though it does tickle my fancy as I look back to that occasion ever memorable in my experience, but because it helps to illustrate how readily young people of a vivacious temperament are captivated and won to a theory by something strikingly original in its conception, or by some

fact which has come under their own observation and is identified with it.

I remember a young friend of more than common ability and thirst for knowledge of the sort so popular nowadays, telling me one day, with a look of conscious triumph lighting up his expressive features, that he had discovered in himself the remarkable power of moving forward at will the upper outward rim of one ear. Although the movement was barely perceptible, I could not, of course, under the circumstances forbear congratulating him on his close connection with the horse and the mule "who have no understanding," or some other animal particularly remarkable for the length of its ears, for this movement, and for its proverbial want of even animal sense.

The close observation of the habits of animals in connection with wide-spread and almost universal ways which men, savage as well as civilized, exhibit almost instinctively—of, for example, twitching the face, or opening the eyes and mouth, shrugging the shoulders, under the influence of certain emotions—may be very interesting. It may, too, be very seductive, opening as it seems to do an easy and short way especially to ambitious youngsters of attaining celebrity as disciples of the great leaders of Progress. But one can hardly call this rubbishy nonsense by the venerable name of Philosophy. Patient and kind and gentle, as all truly great men are, particularly those who labor to form their character on the model of the Saviour's, I am afraid a St. Thomas Aquinas or a St. Augustine would rather stare incredulously, and express himself strongly if this sort of babbling folly were introduced to his notice as the prolegomena of a new system for explaining the connection

of mind and matter, or the identity of reason and animal instinct. The relations between soul and body, and how the purely spiritual substance acts through brain and nerve power in the material body are, even apart from religion, sacred and venerable, when we consider the labors of so many illustrious scholars and profound thinkers to expound them. They should be respected and let alone at any rate by smart young men whose only qualification for the study of these very difficult subjects is the picking up in the pages of a magazine or a newspaper and retaining in the memory some pearl of apparent wisdom, culled from the writings of a Darwin, or a Huxley, or a Stephens, or a Clifford, and thrown before the undiscerning public by an editor badly in want of a paragraph to complete his columns, or to fill up a fixed number of pages.

I do not venture to enter into the arcana of the Philosophy of the day. The vestibule is so fiercely guarded by grim dragons with bristling and horrid names never heard of in former generations, that one who has his time well occupied with serious work does not much care to try and effect an entry. Then when, after some difficulty and loss of time in furbishing up old roots, and applying them to the monsters and carefully securing them, one finds that they are merely scarecrows and well known by other and less pretentious names, the impression that the whole of this new philosophy is a make-believe and a sham is almost too strong to allow one to examine it by close study and prolonged investigation.

I believe that nine tenths of those who read those articles which are supposed to indicate the mental progress of the leaders of modern thought, think about them much as I do. If they do not chance to have been trained

in the meaning of these new terms so formidable-looking in their capital letters, they are either disgusted with this affectation of superior knowledge, so out of place in a paper meant for the general public, or so outraged when, after considerable loss of time, they find out the true meaning under a well-known name, that they quickly turn their attention to something else that is more readable and interesting.

If the outcome of all this stilted talk be only some of the nonsensical vagaries I have mentioned, I believe no sensible man will honor with the venerable name of Philosophy "this perilous stuff," however disguised it may be with high-sounding and sesquipedalian diction.

It is a pity there is not some clever writer gifted with the genius of Molière to write something like the "*Précieuses Ridicules*" about the formidable essays which so often encumber the pages of the "monthlies" and the "quarterlies." After the ponderous magazines have been in labor for weary months upon months, and a "*ridiculus mus*," like  $x$  in the  $n$ th power, is the offspring, one regrets that the beauty of the style has fascinated him. The public, if their religious interests are really cared for by the editors, would be benefited much more by popular expositions on the marvels of creation, and the evidences of design, and the adaptations of things to certain ends so visible throughout the animal and vegetable world and the whole universe. An occasional essay upon the folly of making "much ado about nothing" would be much more to the general taste and interest than most ingenious arguments to prove that He who has made the organs of hearing and of sight and of speech is destitute of intelligence.

The labors of the old pagan philosophers in their



search after truth and light, before society was leavened by the preaching of the Gospel, is most interesting. In their writings we discover real power of mind, comprehensive grasp of the state of the question, marvellous conclusions on premises barely discernible to the eye of natural reason. Even admitting that Plato and other great thinkers of antiquity derived some knowledge from the sacred books of the Hebrews, the results of their profound thought fill us with admiration of their wisdom.

And if, notwithstanding these mental powers of the highest order, and souls superior to frivolous vanity and the ordinary temptations included under "the pride of life," they miserably failed in the attainment of such truth as would satisfy their own longings or command the reverent assent of the crowds who hung upon their lips, how miserable must be the failure of our leaders of thought, who, unable to stamp out in their minds the sublime morality and the heavenly wisdom of the Gospel, attempt to wrap up the elements of this teaching in forced enigmas that trifle with sound sense and fail even to amuse and entertain the intelligence of the public!

When these men, distinguished as they are by considerable ability in scientific studies, and patient and keen observers of nature in every form, go beyond the limits within which their knowledge and judgment are most valuable to mankind in all that regards the present life, and enter upon the vast realm of theology for which they have received no training, and rashly speculate on the dark future, they are bound to fall as surely as Icarus when the wings hastily glued to his shoulders dropped in the excessive sunshine. These men affect the cry of Goethe, and promise their disciples "*ex fumo dare lucem*"—to evolve light out of their obscure and



contradictory yet elaborate and ingenious theories. They have not only failed, but are becoming objects of pity to those who once trusted in their splendid abilities.

I say therefore that in the failure of those who in spite of their obstinate determination to exclude Gospel light are yet pervaded by it, we can have no stronger proof of the utter powerlessness of men to attain to a perfect or adequate knowledge of God and the end of their own being, unless they "become as little children" in all that regards these mysterious truths. The book of nature is open before them. God has unfolded it to their view. We cannot think of His infinite goodness and condescension, as it has been revealed to us through Jesus Christ, without feeling that He, from His bright throne above, must look with admiring fondness on those of His children as have most distinguished themselves in these pursuits. He must have smiled "as when the morning stars praised Him together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody" (Job xxxviii. 7), at the development of the faculties which He had bestowed upon them, through their own unaided industry and perseverance. What a pity that pride should rob them of further supernatural grace, and prevent them from accepting with gratitude the glad tidings communicated freely to men of good will, through the teaching of His infallible Church!

How this most consoling truth has been preserved in the great plan of our Divine Lord, and how it is communicated—not only to the learned, but to the simple and uneducated poor and little ones of the fold—will form the subject of the next chapter. I mean to show briefly and plainly that it never entered into the mind of the Founder of Christianity to perpetuate His law and revealed will in the pages of a written or printed book.

This great and enduring mercy was to be communicated to all by the *viva voce* teaching and preaching of a body of men who, not for their own sakes or their own merits, but for the good of mankind in general, were to be guided forever in this all-important office by the watchful guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

## CHAPTER II.

**The True Sense of Revelation Cannot be Determined by the Bible Alone.**

IT is out of the question in a small work like this, meant for the general public, to enter into proofs of the fact of a Divine Revelation. Those who believe in the existence of a personal God—and I am convinced that every reasonable being, whatever he may *say* to the contrary, feels this belief in his inmost consciousness—must, if he will think seriously on the subject, be irresistibly led to the conclusion that this Supreme Being has announced His will to man. The scientists who devote their lives to the study of nature are so impressed with the manifestations of design, even in the most minute forms of animal and vegetable life that, while they proclaim that all things are evolved from a blind force or an unconscious energy, they pay an involuntary homage to this supreme Artificer who has “made all things well.” One cannot read the writings of those close and patient observers of organic forms without meeting constantly expressions which prove beyond doubt, that the evidence of plan and arrangement of parts to certain ends, overwhelm their affected scepticism. When our Divine Lord would point out to His followers the loving care of the Great Father of all mankind for the chief work of His creative power, He directed their attention to the birds of the air and the wild flowers of the field as the most striking proofs of this doctrine.

An unconscious Creator is, as the late Lord Beaconsfield remarks, "the extreme of absurdity."

Once we bow down before this irresistible conviction, and feel, in opposition to the suggestions of pride and self-independence, that our Heavenly Father cares for the least things He has brought into existence, we must believe that He could not allow the only beings in the world capable of recognizing His power and wisdom, to wander away from Him in hopeless search after the origin of their presence in this world. If, through some cause or other, supposing the history of the primeval fall is disputed or denied, the greatest intellects found it impossible to attain to a satisfactory knowledge of their first beginning and last end, should not a God of infinite goodness be bound by the law of His nature to tell them?

A Revelation from Him that would illumine the darkness which spread like a dense pall over all mankind was surely to be expected; and that this expectation was fulfilled in the knowledge communicated by Him to our first parents, and afterwards in the voice of inspired Patriarchs and Prophets and the deliverer of the Hebrew nation, and finally by Jesus Christ, is proved by a mass of testimony of the most learned, wise, and good of all ages, which by its irresistible weight overpowers all opposition.

Clever infidels have assigned certain causes for the rise and establishment of Christianity, independent of Revelation; but, as Cardinal Newman well remarks in treating of Gibbon's "five causes," it is the wonderful combination of these causes, and whatever others may be assigned for the fact of the universal belief in the divine mission and character of Christ, that gives the overwhelming evidence in favor of Christian Faith.

I will not dwell any longer upon this point. The present uncertain state of religious opinion outside the Catholic Church, the wild and fanciful speculations of the leaders of modern free-thought, and the still more fanciful theories, founded on mere assumptions and isolated physical facts, and the constant jumping from particular observations to general conclusions, prove beyond reasonable doubt that if it rested with the cleverest men of the day to solve by their own unaided reason the problems of existence, and to construct a system of religion, they would be absolutely powerless to offer to mankind anything in the shape of fixed truth which might form the basis of tranquil Faith and firm Hope and supernatural Charity. A light from above is an absolute necessity to set before us a religion that will sustain us under the many tribulations of this passing life, and enable us to meet death with manly courage.

The question then arises, where are we to find a Faith like this? Is it contained in the Bible?

I willingly admit that this Holy Book, since it was presented to mankind by the Infallible Church as the inspired word of God, has been the stay and comfort of innumerable earnest souls. Millions and hundreds of millions have gleaned in its pages peace of mind such as the world cannot give; and assured by its consoling promises countless multitudes who have thus been enabled to rise superior to the temptations which continually assail poor human nature. I know no more charming spectacle outside Catholic Faith, than the pious feeling of the earnest Christian who, seeing the vanity of all worldly things, clings to his Bible with fond affection as the source of his purest happiness here below, drinks in with ever-increasing ardor its heavenly maxims, and finds in its salutary

lessons a solace for every trial. If anything religious can be compared with that simple, docile, and childlike trust in the merciful dispensation of the Sacraments, it is surely the almost superstitious reverence with which earnest Christians, who are not Catholics, open the sacred volume, hoping to find in the first page that presents itself to their view a ready answer to their wants, and believing that the Holy Spirit of God addresses them individually in its silent words. I reverence the man or woman who makes it the rule of daily life to read a chapter in the Bible; pondering as he or she reverently reads its salutary lessons, and endeavoring to the best of his or her ability to bring out to every member of the family circle its solemn meaning.

Why we Catholics should be accused of depriving ourselves of this wholesome gratification, or why it should be constantly stated by those who differ from us that the Church is opposed to the pious reading of the Bible, is only to be accounted for by the force of traditional prejudices.

In times of religious ferment, when private judgment warred hotly with the divine authority established by our Divine Lord to teach us His holy law, and men were wresting the mysterious words of Scripture "to their own destruction," the Church forbade the indiscriminate reading of the sacred Scriptures. "The unlearned and the unstable" were warned of the grave consequences, involving "destruction," if they took it upon themselves to interpret the sacred text in favor of dangerous error, and were advised to learn the articles of the one Faith, "which is necessary for salvation," rather from the legitimately appointed guide than from their own heated prejudices and excited feelings.

But men of good will who were well grounded in their religion, were always encouraged by the Church to seek



in the Holy Book healthy food and nourishment for their languishing souls. To read a chapter in the Bible every day was part of the rule of every religious order, and of every college, where ecclesiastics were preparing for the sacred ministry. A certain portion, a page or two, formed part of the reading in the refectory ; and superiors watched carefully that, besides this reading in common, each member of the community attended daily to this practice in private. I remember well that in college, the visiting Dean always looked at the Bible, which, by the rules of the house, should be found on the desk of every student, and noted in his report-book, as an indication of want of piety, if the leaves of the sacred volume were uncut or unmarked by a register. We were supposed to be sufficiently advanced by previous training not to dwell on certain events or passages that might be fraught with danger to a prurient and uncontrolled imagination. The Superior often pointed out the number of chapters in the Bible and the length of time it would take, by private reading of a chapter each day, before study of ordinary business, to enable the student to go through the whole book from Genesis to the end, and the great comfort it would be in after-years to all who were faithful in the discharge of this pious duty.

Some Protestants still believe it to be an incontrovertible fact that the Bible is a sealed book for Papists of all classes. The truth is, bishops and priests teach their people, who can afford it, to have in their houses the best edition of the Bible approved by the Church which their means will allow them to purchase, to treat the Holy Book with the greatest reverence, and to make a practice of reading frequently the life of Christ and His blessed words as recorded by the Evangelists.

It is objected, that the Roman Catholic clergy are always opposed to the reading of the Bible in schools, and that this is a proof that they regard the reading of the Scriptures as un-Catholic and Protestant. A sufficient answer to this objection is that the Catholic Church condemns the irreverent use of the Holy Book. I need say nothing about unauthorized versions, and the interpretations so flippantly given by ignorant Scripture-readers and school-masters who have never learned the Catechism. They who know how the copies of the sacred Scriptures are knocked about in school-rooms, and handled more carelessly than a worthless novel or a sensational story-book, can appreciate this answer.

When I learned, many years ago, with what honor well-instructed and consistent Hebrews treated the Old Testament, it seemed to me that many of our Bible-readers in public schools might have learned from them a useful lesson. Of course there are Jews and Jews ; but this I know for a fact, that a Jew who has been well brought up by believing parents, and even moderately instructed in the Hebrew language and the teaching of the Rabbis, will always open the sacred volume with a reverence that might excite the amazement of an ordinary Christian. A Catholic gentleman told me that, desiring on one occasion to have the interpretation of a well-educated Hebrew on a disputed passage in *Isaias*, he went to his house and asked him to explain the passage. This Jew, once well known in *Grahamstown* as a wealthy and respectable merchant, foremost in every work of common charity and benevolence, first put on his dress-coat and then a pair of spotless white gloves, before he turned over the pages of the sacred volume. Many Christians who are always belauding the Bible may probably smile at

these marks of respect, and attribute them to Jewish notions of external ceremonial. If they took the pains to consider what this reverent handling of the Holy Book meant, they might then understand better the action of the Catholic Church in guarding the sacred Scriptures from the rough usage of thoughtless boys and girls, who, from familiarity with it as a school-book, come in time to regard it as the Chinaman or savage Indian who turns it to uses never dreamt of by the pious folk who seem to rest their salvation on the ardent zeal with which they help Bible societies to shower it on these benighted pagans.

I repeat then that I admire those who read the Bible reverently, whether they are Protestants or Catholics. But I am decidedly opposed to any course that naturally tends to bring the Holy Book into that familiarity which breeds contempt. I regard the scattering of Bibles over the world, for this reason, as a huge mistake. I believe that no reasonable man, be he ever so wedded to the popular notion of disseminating Bibles by the million, will calculate the growth of reverent piety by the ratio of distribution. If it be a fact, what is asserted by men who ought to know, that cheap Bibles have been used as wadding for guns, and for all sorts of domestic purposes, by people on whom it has been forced, then I think that even zealous Bible Christians should have their ardor in the work of diffusing copies somewhat cooled. Even they might be brought to understand that the practice of distributing them indiscriminately by colporteurs and ignorant agents, interested chiefly in being able to hand in large lists to their employers, could be carried too far. It is the conviction of many experienced men, Protestant as well as Catholic, that this *furor* or mania for scattering

Bibles broadcast over the world is one of the chief causes for the growing irreverence and disbelief in the Divine message that is spreading in all directions. Where the Holy Book is judiciously offered to those who really desire to receive a copy, and who are likely to read it with proper dispositions, much good may be done in this way.

I perfectly agree with what Cardinal Newman says in his "Grammar of Assent" on this subject: "It has attuned the minds of well-disposed people to religious thoughts; it has given them a high moral standard, it has served them in associating religion with compositions which, even humanly considered, are among the most sublime and beautiful ever written; especially, it has impressed upon them the series of Divine providences in behalf of man from his creation to his end, and above all, the words, deeds, and sacred sufferings of Him in whom all the providences of God centre." "What Scripture," his Eminence continues, "especially illustrates, from its first page to its last, is God's providence; and that is nearly the only doctrine held with a real assent by the mass of religious Englishmen. Hence the Bible is so great a solace and refuge to them in trouble. I repeat, I am not speaking of particular schools and parties in England, whether of the High Church or the Low, but of the mass of piously-minded and well-living people in all ranks of the community." ("Grammar of Assent," p. 53.)

But all this is very different from saying that the Bible, left to each individual judgment, is the proper Rule of Faith. It is all very well for piously-disposed people to find, or imagine they find, in its pages a confirmation of the religious opinions or views in which they have been brought up. No one will think of maintaining

that the Bible alone, apart from creeds, formularies, and articles, and constitutions, will be found a clear and distinct and unerring code of dogmas or maxims which may safely be regarded as the Faith "without which it is impossible to please God."

If we could suppose the case of two men, whose minds, as far as distinct religious tenets are concerned, might be regarded as a *tabula rasa*, perfectly clear of any preconceived doctrines; and that these, equally matched in ability and ordinary learning, were set apart to draw up from the Bible a certain formulary of belief, it is quite certain that important differences of opinion would manifest themselves on nearly every article of Faith. One might as well predict that the letters of the alphabet shaken out of a bag would, by any amount of shaking, range themselves into a definite order. If by any stretch of imagination or intense belief in supernatural individual guidance the two men I have supposed were to be found agreeing on what are called fundamental or essential doctrines, this outcome of their united wisdom would, strange and almost miraculous as it might appear, scarcely be regarded as a Revelation from Heaven. And if on comparing notes one yielded to the convictions of the other, and their formula of religion was thus rendered alike in every particular, it would only stand for what it was worth, according to the known abilities and learning of the two inquirers.

But suppose that not two but fifty, or a hundred, or a thousand well-trained linguists and experts were to put their heads together, and sink their differences of opinion, in bringing out a complete set of articles, what security could this concentration and amalgamation of learned opinions afford to one really in earnest about fulfilling



the conditions of salvation? None whatever. A multitude of opinions is only a probability at best; and who will reasonably trust his hopes of eternal life to a mere probability as long as there is a possibility of positive and certain assurance?

Can we for a moment imagine, that Divine Wisdom would afford only a mere chance of fulfilling the conditions which have been formally laid down for the attainment of His reward exceeding great?

Suppose there was question only of the honors or position attached to an examination for the learned professions, who would think of employing the "coaching" of mere amateurs without experience, when the services of well-tried and successful tutors were at hand?

The whole scheme of deriving fixed and certain Faith from the written word, and its interpretation by unauthorized and fallible teachers, is a mere farce—"a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." The Apostle says that "without Faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. ix. 6). Faith is certain knowledge of the true meaning of the Divine message, and whatever guidance or teaching cannot afford this certain knowledge, though it were ostensibly as perfect in all respects as the tribunal lately established in England for the revision of the sacred text, or the committee now sitting in the Colony for the correction of the Kaffir version, it is deficient in one essential particular, absolutely necessary to afford a basis for anything like Faith.

The real ground of Faith is the veracity of God; and if there is no certainty as to what God has actually said, there can be no Faith.

It is needless to dwell further on an absolute truism. Any intelligent person can at once realize to himself the



cogency of the argument. Select from all nations the most gifted scholars, eliminate from your council every element of weakness, subject the chosen few to every test that might convince the world of their fitness for the task, as far as human learning is concerned, and let them decide unanimously on the meaning of controverted passages, as long as there is no guarantee for the inerrancy of their united judgment, the result is only an opinion after all.

They may be wrong, and consequently those who trust implicitly in their decision may expose their salvation to manifest peril. If Christ has declared that a firm Faith in all things which He commanded His Apostles to teach is a necessary condition to secure the happiness He has merited for us, and our learned assessors agree, after much altercation, that the Catholic Church is wrong in its interpretation of an important passage, who will venture to say that, beyond all doubt, they, and not the Catholic Church, have infallible truth on their side?

Suppose this passage relates to the Real Presence of the Body of the Lord in the Blessed Eucharist, or the right meaning of the words, "This is my Body," on which depends our hopes of a glorious resurrection (John vi. 55), how can any earnest Christian be satisfied with a mere opinion? He puts the matter to this learned assembly, and he says, "Are you absolutely certain that you have laid down the only true meaning of these mysterious words, and that the whole Catholic Church, which differs from you, is absolutely and unmistakably wrong?" What answer can they give, on their principles, but this: "No, we are not certain; no one can be certain? But we have every reason to believe that, as far as we can judge, we are right."

The notion that our Divine Lord would have left the poor and simple and unlearned to such guidance, in a matter of infinite importance to their eternal welfare, is manifestly inconceivable. Could a way so doubtful and uncertain out of difficulties, where a mistake should be attended with consequences far beyond temporal loss or death itself, be the simple way which, according to the Prophet, should be so plain and straight that not even fools could mistake it? (Isaias xxxv. 8.) What would Redemption be worth, if its chief fruit, "a glorious Resurrection," were to be left to mere chance or a question of probabilities? How, by any possibility, could the ignorant, to whom He chiefly preached while He was on earth, and the poor, to whom He rejoiced that the Gospel had been announced (Luke vii. 22), and the great majority of mankind who resemble them,—how could these hope to attain the certain knowledge of what God required as a condition of salvation, by weighing and balancing claims of contending tribunals, all alike destitute of infallible certainty? How can such as these decide on the probabilities, who can know nothing, or next to nothing, of the qualifications of such tribunals? Verily, in such an hypothesis, the Saviour of the world was only laying a snare for the unwary and the simple-minded, and availing Himself, as some unbelievers have insinuated, of an opportunity of depriving trusting souls of the inheritance which He professed to purchase for them by His passion and death.

But I will suppose, for a moment, that Christ said to Himself, "The ignorant and the unlearned will follow the decision of their superiors. Those who possess the necessary lights for attaining the meaning of My arrangements and My law will decide, in cases of difficulty, and

then the way will be clear and straight to those not so highly favored." The bare idea of such a scheme is fraught with blasphemous imputations against His infinite wisdom. Let any one picture to himself this state of things, and he will see in a moment how absurd and impracticable it would be. The learned in all professions must spend their time in solving, as best they may, theological difficulties; scientists, doctors in law and medicine, artists, men of genius, as well as theologians, must study and see their way out of difficulties involved in the interpretation of the written word. They must neglect their ordinary work, and apply themselves to the acquisition of the original languages of the text, hunt up old records, compare and collate old manuscripts, diligently examine the writings of the learned men of past generations, hear what their brethren have to say on each point, and at last, when they have, in this long and tedious investigation, neglected the duties of their state, give the poor and simple their candid opinion on every doubtful point, and thus enable them to have eternal life. The supposition is too extravagant to have been adopted by Infinite Wisdom.

How plain and simple, on the other hand, does the plan of the Catholic Church appear, in contrast with these impracticable and silly theories which are only the natural and logical consequences of heretical teaching! The Catholic Church declares now, as she ever did, "I am the infallible teacher which the Son of God has appointed to solve and explain any difficulties that may arise in the interpretation of the Divine message. I am the inheritor of the promises of supernatural assistance. I am inspired by the same Holy Spirit that inspired the writers of the Bible. I have always explained the

hidden things and 'the things hard to be understood,' and I am to explain it to the consummation of the world. If you desire to know beyond all doubt the conditions of salvation, hear my voice. I will speak at once, and with no uncertain sound. I will be to you the voice of God Himself. Christ our Lord, who gave me this commission, has said, 'He that heareth you heareth Me.' This and this only is the true Word of God. Hear my word, if you would not share the fate of the unbelieving publican and that of the unfortunate pagan."

It is a remarkable fact that the Catholic Church alone professes to teach the meaning of the Divine Word with infallible certainty. There is no Christian denomination in the world that pretends to have received this power but the everlasting Church. In fact they dare not. Once it is admitted that an infallible teacher is necessary to enable mankind to know with infallible certainty what God has revealed, it must be admitted, at the same time, that the Church established by Christ and His Apostles possessed this privilege. And if she once possessed it, and the promise of our Divine Lord to send the spirit of truth to teach her implied so much, then she must have possessed it always; for this spirit was, according to the same promise, to abide with her forever. Forthwith, the *raison d'être*, the source of the very existence of any Church separated from her vanishes altogether.

Every one knows that the only reason on which every Protestant community justifies its position of antagonism to the old Church is, that this Church established by our Lord shamefully erred in her teaching; that not only were her members steeped in iniquity, but that she taught authoritatively hideous idolatry and blasphemous

and absurd fables. But if she was once infallible, this total deviation from true teaching is a manifest denial of first principles.

Hence I maintain that no Church but the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Church dares to assume the privilege of infallibility.

Since it is evident that there can be no certain knowledge of the meaning of the Divine Revelation unless the teaching body knows with certainty what God has taught, and since it is also a fact beyond dispute that those who oppose and protest against the Divine authority of the Catholic Church by this act cut themselves off from the possibility of knowing the true meaning of the Divine message, Faith such as St. Paul describes this virtue—Faith firm and undoubting, “the evidence of things that appear not,” Faith founded on the veracity of God—is beyond the reach of all who have separated themselves from the “one fold” or approve of that separation.

Cardinal Newman, with his usual clearness, puts the matter so plainly that, as far as the argument is considered in itself, and apart from the confusion and bewildering difficulties with which human ingenuity, in distorting the facts of history, has surrounded it, it is absolutely unanswerable. “It is very evident,” says the Cardinal, “that no other religious body has a right to demand such an exercise of faith in them” (a faith that excludes the possibility of doubt), “and a right to forbid you further inquiry, but the Catholic Church; and for this simple reason, that no other body even claims to be infallible, let alone the proof of such a claim. Here is the defect at first starting, which disqualifies them, one and all, from ever competing with the Church of God. The sects about us, so far from demanding your faith,



actually call on you to inquire and to doubt freely about their own merits; they protest that they are but voluntary associations, and would be sorry to be taken for anything else. Then as to the established religion, grant that there are those in it who forbid inquiry into its claims; yet still dare they maintain that it is infallible? If they do not (and no one does), how can they forbid inquiry about it, or claim for it the absolute faith of any of its members? Faith under these circumstances is not really faith, but obstinacy." ("Discourses to Mixed Congregations," p. 230.)

Now, the most that can be said against this authoritative teaching which excludes doubt or even inquiry, is that it makes men slaves and holds them in cruel bondage. But let the matter be looked at fairly in the face; let it be understood that it is God Himself, the Infinite Truth, that speaks by the mouth of His appointed teachers. "It is not you that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 20). And what then is the meaning of these clap-trap words—"slavery" and "bondage"? Is it slavery to hear and obey the voice of God? Must a man claim to himself the right of doubting God's own word, and treating his Maker as he would scorn to treat a trusted friend? What would we think of the man who professed an ardent, trusting love for us, and at the same time claimed to himself the right of mistrusting and watching our every word and action, and insisting ever on his right, whenever it so pleased him, to cast us off and despise us? There are few if any who would care for such friendship as this. It is insulting and odious in its very claim; and when applied to the God of all truth it is simple blasphemy.

How then can any one who believes in the Holy Catho-



lic Church, reserve his right of one day doubting her authority and questioning her teaching?

How beautifully touching are the words of the Cardinal, as he seems to smile gently at the proud world's outcry against simple, docile, and trusting faith, and seems to hear the rude names of "bigot," "unreasoning slave," "fool that allows his judgment to be fettered in the galling bonds of blind obedience"! "Fetters indeed! Yes, 'the cords of Adam,' the fetters of love, these are what bind him to the Holy Church; he is, with the Apostle, the slave of Christ, the Church's Lord, united never to part, as he trusts, while life lasts, to her sacraments, to her sacrifices, to her saints, to the Blessed Mary her advocate, to Jesus, to God." (*Ibid.* p. 216.)

Yes, but it will be said: Are not reasonable men to inquire, and does not the Apostle commend those who, like the Bereans, "search the Scriptures"?

Of course every man who is capable of making anything like a reasonable inquiry, is bound to make it, and would be neglecting a most important duty if he did not. He should carefully consider "the credentials of the Church," satisfy himself that she is the legitimately appointed guide, and the Church of the promises, and that she alone, amongst all other Christian societies, possesses the distinguishing marks of Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity. Every one ought to push this inquiry carefully, according to the amount of his ability and his knowledge. But however great his talents, and extensive his learning, and polished his critical acumen, he ought not to make a fool of himself, by wasting precious time in hunting up every mare's-nest that ingenious persons and teachers of error may indicate to him. Rational men have their duties to attend to, and should mind their busi-

ness. It requires more than smartness to constitute a theologian: and Christ never meant that they who, from their calling and state in life, had responsible work before them, should neglect this work for the profound study of theology.

The inquiry as regards the simple and the unlearned, whose all-absorbing desire is to know the blessed will of God, may be summed up in these few questions and the reasoning that is intimately connected with them: "Did Christ leave us an unerring guide to teach us the way to heaven, and to instruct us in the knowledge of all these truths that are necessary for salvation? Surely He ought to have done so, knowing how we should be perplexed and troubled with the conflicting claims of our varying creeds. And if He ought to have given us this guide, most assuredly, considering His loving care for the poor and unenlightened, he has done so. Where then is the old Church that He established? If she was the right Church once, she must be the right Church to the end of the world. All the contending sects, even those who affect the name of Catholic, though every one called them Protestants in our fathers' time, say that the Roman Catholic is the oldest. In her bosom alone can we find rest for our weary souls. Christ certainly never meant that we were to spend our lives in hunting for proofs that He broke His word, and allowed her, in this century or that, or under such a Pope, or under certain doubtful and perplexing circumstances, to fall away from the faithful discharge of the important office once confided to her. We must be safe if we trust with confidence in the promise of our Lord and Saviour. He said to the first teachers of His religion: 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations; and, behold, I am with

you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20); and 'I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever—the spirit of truth—who shall abide with you and be in you' (John xiv. 16, 17). The Apostles died over seventeen hundred years ago. Christ must have meant therefore by these promises of perpetual guidance to be with their successors in the office of teaching: and as there is no other Church in the whole world but the Catholic Church that claims to be united with the Church of the Apostles, she must be the right teacher, and the only one to whose guidance we can safely trust our eternal welfare."

Here is a course of reasoning so plain and brief and convincing, that it may well be called, in the words of the Prophet, "a way in which not even fools can err."

As to that text, "Search the Scriptures," when I see it blazoned forth on the cover of every penny tract, as well as on the title-page of every unwholesome-looking tome of polemical time-worn materials, I feel amazed at the crass ignorance or brazen impudence of men who will go on repeating, parrot-like, this form of words, when it has been shown to a demonstration over and over again that they have no more connection with the argument than if they were quoted by the arch-enemy of mankind to upheave the everlasting work of Christ. Pious and simple-minded Protestants understand from their teachers, that these words of the Apostle had reference to their Bible in the form and with the same contents as they have them now, while it is a fact, that they could not possibly have reference to the New Testament, which was not written at the time, and that the Bereans were simply commended for doing what I am stating it is the duty of

all reasonable men to do—namely, to examine and to satisfy themselves about the credentials of the teachers to whom they are about to entrust their dearest interests. This sort of text-quoting, and applying the “Word of God” ever and always to the written word, even when the context shows that the expression has reference to preaching, reminds me of the smart answer of a Catholic missionary who was badgered out of patience by this dogmatic and peculiar style of argument founded on a few detached passages. “We read,” he said to his polemical antagonist, “that Judas hanged himself; and we read also, ‘Go thou and do likewise.’”

As I said in the Introduction, I mean in this book to confine myself to the argument of an infallible Church viewed in itself or *a priori*. The reading world is weary with all that has been written about the wickedness and errors of Popes, and the wrong decisions of Councils, and the interpolation and corruption of their decrees. They who believe that the whole Church had for ages been sunk in idolatry and scandalous error will believe anything, no matter how opposed to the Divine promises; because if this were a fact, then it would necessarily follow that Christ was an impostor, and had broken His solemn word: on which all Christendom firmly relied, without question or doubt, for fifteen hundred years.

It would be useless therefore to enter, however briefly, upon the much-disputed ground of history. Let those who fiercely maintain that Christ deceived the believing world, and attempt to prove it by any amount of critical essays, amuse themselves in turning over the millions of pages that have been written on this part of the argument. I contend for principle and on grounds that any one may fully understand; and I consider that I have proved to a

demonstration, that without a living, speaking, and infallible guide, we cannot know with certainty what God would have us believe; and consequently, that Divine Faith is an impossibility in any communion or sect of Christians that cannot prove, or dare not claim, the privilege of teaching with infallible certainty the true meaning of the revealed Word of God.

In the next chapter I mean to show that private judgment, or the exercise of free thought in determining the sense of the Divine message, is just as delusive as the scheme of deriving real Faith from the text of the Bible, or the written, silent, and often mysterious Word of God.

## CHAPTER III.

**Private Judgment : What it really Means.**

“**W**HAT’S in a name?” the poet asks, as if a mere name were nothing of real value in general estimation. But in this unthinking age, a name, or even the shadow of a popular name, is the chief thing that wins the regard and admiration of the multitude. What will not the excitable common herd of mankind be moved to accomplish when the cry of “Liberty” is raised by artful demagogues! Liberty may often mean no more than those unbridled excesses that wrung from the ill-fated Madame Roland the well-known exclamation so constantly echoed by the thoughtful and the wise. Alas! what strange and almost incomprehensible prejudices are kindled into blazing fury by this name so dear to every generous and manly heart! It seems to me that what is called the right of private judgment is eminently one of those high-sounding and emotion-exciting names which are supposed to signify so much, and which, like the much-abused cry of Liberty, too frequently means the very opposite of what it is generally supposed to express.

Private judgment might, as Cardinal Newman puts it, be better called “the private right of judgment;” or, in other words, the right of a certain class, and no one’s else. I know of no greater tyranny than that of those who, while they howl almost frantically against the authority of the Infallible Church, would crush by every means in



their power any doubt or questioning of their own fallible judgments in matters of religious belief.

If they professed to hold truth with anything like certainty, there might be some excuse for this intolerance; because truth is necessarily intolerant of error. But when they are bound on their principles to admit that their faith is merely human, and therefore of its very nature liable to be mistaken and unfounded, it is amazing how furiously they rave against the Catholic doctrine which differs from their own opinions.

I am not in the least exaggerating this abuse of what these men are supposed to reverence as their inalienable birthright and the precious charter of their conscientious opinions.

Every one knows what a storm is raised when some Protestant of rank or position joins the Catholic Church. One would have thought that England was threatened with invasion when the Marquis of Ripon was appointed Governor of India. No one doubted for a moment of his high statesmanship and capacity for this important office; but it was said, had he not forfeited all right to any government appointment when he dared to avow himself a Papist? The low growl of savage discontent with which the news was received by the Protestant public, that the Grand Master of Freemasonry had become a member of the Roman Catholic Church found some sort of satisfaction in the fierce denunciations which, from Exeter Hall to the most humble conventicle, reverberated through the land. The ministry, who were congratulating themselves on removing their most noble colleague to a post worthy of his talents, far away from the scene of his unpardonable sin against fanatic bigotry, must have shuddered at the manifestations of wide-spread indignation

which greeted the appointment. And yet after all was not the most noble Marquis exercising only his right of private judgment?

I dare say some of the most noisy in their denunciations of his change in religion would have been either indifferent altogether or simply amused, had he chosen to join the Plymouth brethren, or the Birmingham Philadelphians, or even the Mormons or the Anythingarians. But his offence in returning to the Church of his ancestors was too rank, "it stunk in the nostrils of Heaven;" and the gentle saints, not because their own pride was hurt, but because they knew beyond doubt that Heaven was angry, felt themselves impelled to share in the celestial indignation.

I wonder if people, sensible in other respects, are ever ashamed of themselves for having given way to such manifest inconsistency. I dare say they very rarely are, for unreasoning hate which appears to be engendered by the pure love of God is seldom followed by remorse.

The chief priests and rulers probably had no compunctious visitings, or a desire to make amends for their impious deicide, even when they were convinced that the enemy of their law and of the temple had actually risen from the dead.

Now what is this private judgment which, while it claims such remarkable privileges for itself, is so despotic in refusing even ordinary consideration and forbearance to the religious belief of others?

I cannot give a better or more comprehensive definition of it than that of the learned scholar already quoted. According to Cardinal Newman, "Private judgment commonly means passive impression."

A man who exercises what he calls his private judg-

ment, takes up some peculiar view, not the result of his own thought-out and well-reasoned convictions, but some theory which, in the course of his reading or experience, he has found cut and dry in a sermon, or a magazine, or a newspaper, or which he has picked up it may be in the nursery, or in school, and he makes it his property. It falls in with some fancy or notion of his own, and he likes it, and is guided in his reading of the sacred Scriptures and religious books by this prominent idea. Whatever seems to contradict his favorite theory is flung aside as absurd or ridiculous. He has made up his mind, and that is enough for him. He does not wish to be troubled with the opinion of others, and is disposed to be irritated if they are pressed upon him.

I well remember a case which appears to me an excellent illustration of the point. A very much respected Protestant friend, as kind and good a soul as ever I met, used to give me his religious views in a very condensed form. He did not care for Anglican disputes about the High Church or the Low Church, the narrow or the broad, though he was an active member of an Anglican communion, and ready at all times to perform the duties required of him by his fellow-churchmen or the rector or bishop in possession. "My religion," he used to say, "is condensed in these words: 'Fear God, honor the king, and do good to all men.' " He was what would be called in the world "a God-fearing man." He had no strong political bias, felt a glow of loyalty whenever he heard the national anthem, and was always ready to help the neighbor in the fullest sense of the good Samaritan. If certain inconsistencies in his creed were pointed out to him, he seemed ruffled for the moment, but his gentle excitement passed away like a summer cloud. "What have

I to do," he used to say, "with these quarrels and dissensions and sects? They do not concern me; and if people will make fools of themselves, that is their own affair."

I ventured to remark on one occasion, that it was pretty clear from Revelation, that we are bound to honor God by Faith, and that a certain clearly defined Faith was laid down in the Scriptures as a necessary condition for salvation. I saw that this was pressing the argument too strongly, and only seemed to make him uncomfortable, so I did not press it farther. However, I quite satisfied myself that my amiable friend was as dogmatic in his own way as the most orthodox churchman, and that if brought to a point which conflicted with his comfortable theory, would be likely to say unkind things of those who differed from him. It was many years ago, and I dare say he regarded me as a young man whose notions on religious questions would, in course of time, be moulded into acquiescence with his views. If not, why then he would consider me as one of the fidgety and restless fools who differed from him.

I mention this case as a fair example of one of the mildest forms in which I have seen private judgment manifest itself. Others would argue, and when flooded in argument, storm and rave and say all manner of cutting things about Antichrist and "the abominations of Popery." His extreme view was only pity for my inexperience. I think the case is worth consideration. Whether this worthy gentleman had heard this view expressed by some one or other whom he respected, or picked it up himself in the course of a ramble through the sacred Scriptures or the Prayer-book, I cannot say. But there he had taken his stand, and he was as firm and unyielding

in his opinion as if it had been evolved by years of patient study of the Bible and the commentaries of the Fathers of the Primitive Church. He would not attempt to force any one to take up his standard of Faith, or say unkind things of those who differed from him ; but he decided the matter in his own mind, and was perfectly satisfied in his inmost thoughts, that they were giving themselves unnecessary trouble about things which, if they had only some share of his common-sense, might be settled in a moment. Peace to his ashes ! I can only hope that before he passed away calmly and serenely from the cares of life, he may, even at the last moment, have prayed that a merciful God would fill up whatever was wanting in his good dispositions.

I have dwelt upon this case because it will help to bring out under the most favorable circumstances what I wish to say of the dogmatism and inflexibility of private judgment.

At its very best it is narrow-minded and illiberal. It is a mere sentiment, illogical and unreasonable in its source, and filled up to the brim with self-laudation and conceit.

One of the greatest of its mistakes, and that which attaches me to the definition given of it above—"passive impression"—is that it is the real offspring of individual selection of one out of many established and fashionable ways of looking at religion, and that insensibly it becomes subjective, and impresses and rules inexorably the thoughts and feelings of the person captivated by it. Individual reasoning and the exercise of free-thought have nothing whatever to do with it, unless we attribute to a mere capricious fancy what should only be the well-grounded conviction of an earnest and thoughtful mind.

The truth is there is no such thing as private judg-



ment properly so called possible for the great majority of mankind. Who in fact is capable of so shaking off the impressions of early childhood and the fixed habits of early education and training, that he can imagine himself divested of prejudices in the formation of his religious convictions? As a child he has learned from parents the result of their conclusions about religion, just as they derived them from those by whom they were brought up. There may be and of course are modifications according to the fashions of the time. Ritualism and congregationalism may have gradually assumed new forms, and these peculiarities in the use of certain hymn-books and more polished music, and certain attitudes during divine worship, may have tinged their outward ways of assisting at the service of their particular sects. But what they learned in early life about God, and the soul, and the future, remain so firmly fixed in the mind that it will require a superhuman effort aided by the grace of God, or a revolution stirred up by the powers of darkness, to upheave it.

It seems almost incredible that sensible men could seriously imagine that they are free from bias in their religious views, and perfectly free from prejudice when they go on practising the forms of worship, and preserving, perhaps not quite regularly, but in the main, the habits of devotion to which they have been accustomed. If they are not over-particular in saying the daily prayers which they learned in early life from pious parents, they are certain to resume them whenever their religious emotions are excited by any of those circumstances which, from time to time, throw a cloud over present enjoyment and reveal the mysterious shadows of the shores of eternity. He might be regarded as one hopelessly lost



to early impressions who, attending the funeral service of a dear friend, would not, for a few moments at least, behind the hand or hat raised to his face, endeavor to commune with his Maker in the old way once so dear to him. The feeling is always there, unless it has been studiously crushed out of his soul by pernicious reading or the constant chatter of frivolous and unbelieving associates. And this feeling is cherished as the only true religious sentiment which he thinks it worth while to recognize. Every form of religious worship that does not fall in with this sentiment or clashes with it, is at once rejected as nonsensical or absurd.

Such I believe is the free-thought or the unbiassed private judgment of more than nine-tenths of non-Catholic Christians, a mere passive sentiment impressed by early training and confirmed by habit, and retained in all its vigor in spite of carelessness, unless, as I have said, it is stamped out of the soul by positive unbelief.

No doubt people of this class consider themselves immensely liberal, when they so far control the outward manifestations of this sort of religion, as neither by word nor gesture to indicate their contempt for the religious practices of others. They believe that they are perfectly free from prejudice, large-minded and liberal, while, if they only examined the nature of their private and individual consciousness, they would be forced to admit that they were blindly following the religious views of others, and passing severe and despotic censure on everything in religion which differed from that which had impressed itself on their particular fancy.

The large-minded Dominican preacher Lacordaire proves conclusively, in his first Conference on Religion, that it would require conditions for the free exercise of

private judgment which are absolutely impossible, when the mind can reasonably be supposed to be in that condition which is essential to the real working of a totally unbiassed and untrammelled intellect. After pointing out the immense difficulties of completely silencing the voice of early teaching and first impressions, and the giant work of building up an independent philosophy, the education, the study, the power of mind, and the time and application necessary, he winds up the argument by asking who, after all, is completely superior to national prejudices. Who, he says, could possibly believe for a moment, that his views about religion would be the same if he were born and brought up in the midst of Mohammedans and Buddhists, as if his life were cast from the beginning to the end in the midst of a Christian nation?

The case is completely different when one prays for light and receives a supernatural grace. He is then led on, as it were by the hand of God, through the mazes of conflicting opinions to the oracle of truth; and while he hears with humble docility the voice of the infallible Church, he sees by Faith the unmistakable path that leads to Heaven. He may, if it so pleases him, easily discover another way, bright and cheering and hopeful, as far as the present life is concerned, but the end of which is death. He may, aided by the spirit of pride, and lured on by the fascinations of the tempter, fling aside forever the traditions of Christian Faith. His choice once wilfully and deliberately made in this direction, early associations will soon cease to trouble his peace of mind. There may be vain regrets, as he ventures at times to look forward on the cold, blank, gloomy, and hopeless future, and he may sigh over the ruins of

once-cherished convictions ; but he has murdered the faint life of Faith within him, and with a shudder of remorse he quickly turns away his eyes from the dark prospect, and endeavors in the dissipation of worldly dreams, to shut out the vision of the dread spectre.

I remember once, many years ago, while travelling by night train from London on the Great Northwestern Railway, having a friendly discussion with a very intelligent gentleman on the Eternity of Punishment. We were alone in the compartment, and he started the subject. I proposed that we should argue in the formal logical way observed in the schools, and, as he was quite familiar with the syllogistic form, he readily assented. After numerous distinctions and sub-distinctions of minor propositions, we reached at last the decisive point of the argument, when he good-humoredly confessed that he could not answer the proposition. "I am beaten," he said, "but not convinced. I believed once and was happy. But since I read that book" (naming it) "the Faith which I had inherited from a good mother seemed to die within me, and I feel it can never revive." "But why not pray for help?" "Pray!" he said, in a tone of unmistakable anguish, "I cannot pray; there is a mocking spirit within me that laughs to scorn the bare notion of anything like prayer."

The fact is manifesting itself more clearly every day to reflecting minds. There are only two ways before a reasonable man—the way of Revealed Truth—the way that God has marked out for us, distinctly shown by the Infallible Church; and the way of unbelief, which is the broad way "that leads to destruction," by withdrawing those who choose to follow it from a personal God and "the joy exceeding great" to be found only in

Him. There is Revelation, not guessed at by private judgment, but determined by this everlasting Church. And, on the other hand, there is the Religion of Humanity. There is no *via media*. If men will not hear the Church, they must, whether they desire it or not, sooner or latter give up all pretensions to supernatural guidance, and accept, like the Wesleyan Conference, human standards, fallible declarations as to the meaning of the Divine message, mere human formularies, which when pushed to their logical conclusions end in the senseless worship of man and the uncertain dicta of private judgment.

This miserable phantom of private judgment affects a lofty tone, has ever on its lips the high-sounding words *liberty of thought*, and *independence of mind*, and so forth. But it is a poor delusion; it has no real existence; it is at most an empty bauble, glistening with borrowed light, and it leads those who trust in its ever-changing and unsteady gleams into the most abject slavery that it is possible to conceive. When we admit the teaching of an Infallible Church, when, having carefully considered its credentials, and those marks of authority which no man of good will can mistake, we submit our reason to its guidance, it is not the voice of fallible man that guides us, but the voice of eternal truth, speaking to us by the organs which the God-Man has appointed to be the interpreter of His will to a world cursed by pride.

There is no slavery here, unless it be slavery to obey the call of Him to whom we owe everything that we possess, our mental faculties and our very existence. By this plan of communicating to us what He has prescribed as absolutely necessary for our salvation—a plan perfectly in accord-

ance with the whole economy of redemption—Christ “has made us free.” He has given us that true liberty which, as Cardinal Manning so beautifully expresses it, “means redemption from sin, from falsehood, from human teachers who may err and therefore can mislead. It is redemption from all spiritual tyranny of man over man, and the liberation of the whole man, with all his faculties, his intellect, his heart, his will, his affections; it is a redemption of the soul in all its actions towards God, in its obedience, in its faith, in its adoration, by the Divine authority of Jesus Christ, who has purchased us with His Precious Blood, and has folded us within a Unity where falsehood cannot enter, and under the Divine guidance of a teacher who can never err. Such is true liberty, and there is no other.” (“Temporal Glory of the Sacred Heart,” Cardinal Manning, p. 177.)

Who are those who are ever reproaching Catholics with the slavery of Faith? They are the men who by their own plain and admitted teaching seek most effectually and practically to destroy in those who look up to them for guidance the very essence of intellectual liberty. They are the men who say, “You shall cease to belong to our communion, you shall be expelled from it and excommunicated, if you dare to announce in press or pulpit, or in open speech, anything that differs from the teaching which we have set before you. Although we have no certain assurance to give you of the truth which we have determined for you, though it may be for all we know utterly false, still if an angel from Heaven were to announce to you any other gospel, than ours, let him be anathema.”

I wish honest men would seriously ask themselves, is there any exaggeration here; am I not simply and in plain words declaring a well-known fact?



On Catholic principles, the teaching Church is infallible; it is guided and assisted in its permanent office by the spirit of truth, and therefore cannot err.

In every other Church, even the most liberal, even that which will admit within its bosom the broadest interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, such as necessarily involves the denial of the Divinity of Christ and all mysterious dogma, there is no security for the anxious soul. Every other Church than the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church declares openly, and is forced to declare, that all her teaching may be false. They not only proclaim that they are not safe guides, but endeavor to force the same character on the Catholic Church. Consequently they deprive their members of the chance of having real Faith—even when these members receive dogmas taught by the Catholic Church.

Can any bondage be like to this? It is the slavery of the noblest part of man, worse a thousand times than iron fetters and ropes that bind the body. Yet these men are never weary in assailing Catholics, because, in the simplicity of their Faith, they are not only content but happy beyond measure, to be bound to the God of all truth, by the bonds wherewith Christ our Lord has bound us to Himself, that He might thus secure us from the perils of hell and a miserable eternity.

If those who are in the humiliating position of intellectual slavery, compelled to receive as truth what may be error, were satisfied with the vain attempt to drag down the old Church to their own level, one might repress every other feeling but that of compassion. We might pity them because, unable to have security themselves, they would foolishly envy us who believe that we are in a position that defies this tyranny. But when



every opportunity is taken by these fallible guides to assail the venerable Spouse of Christ, to deride her claims, and to stigmatize her infallible interpretation of God's word by unfounded charges against her morality and appeals to angry passions, and no language is considered too strong to denounce what are called "her silly pretensions," one is obliged, for the sake of the dutiful children of this mother, to vindicate her honor and character, and to state the truth fairly and plainly.

It would be worse than silly to reply to vituperation by vituperation. This line of answer is suited only to the *canaille* of society. The boldest and the most vulgar and the loudest disputants may rule the roost of the fish-market. But in religious discussions hard names are as singularly out of place, as if an educated gentleman attempted by cock-crowing to drown the derisive crows of a lot of rude boys, set on to provoke his patience by this ridiculous uproar.

I have always entertained a profound respect for religious convictions founded on simple and confiding trust, and supported by humble prayer; but when pious believers are taught "in season and out of season" that the surest and the shortest way to secure Heaven, is to esteem themselves above others, and to mount upwards on the imaginary crimes of the neighbor, it is often necessary to enlarge on the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. It then becomes a duty to point out to the victims of this delusion that there is a vast difference between Divine and human dogmas, and that they are carefully to distinguish between the teaching of fallible men and those who according to the Divine promises "are taught of God."

When, on one occasion, I heard a local preacher com-

pare "the credulity" of the Irish, who have clung to the one true Faith with a perseverance and a heroism that excites the admiration of the world, to the blind fanaticism of the pagan Kaffirs, who at the word of a witch-doctor destroyed their cattle and their only means of subsistence, it required the exercise of much patience to hear in silence the vaporings of the pious booby. But when, carried away by the vehemence of his prejudices, he went on to represent my countrymen as deluded so far as to believe the "lies" of their faithful priesthood, I could not help feeling amused at the *naïveté* with which he was telling his own story. Many who were present on that memorable occasion, when Grahamstown gathered together under the influence of that "touch of nature" which made us all feel that the perishing natives were members of the human family, understood well that stupid talk of this effervescent character was completely out of place, and probably felt ashamed of it. Perhaps only a few amongst them knew as well as I, that real Faith is founded on the Word of God explained by an authorized and infallible teacher, while all the danger of "believing a lie" rests with those who mistake frothy declamation for sound doctrine, and put their trust in preachers who are bound to declare that with all their unction, they are but fallible men and "blind leaders of the blind."

I dare say, if this book falls into the hands of men of the stamp of the orator above described, that my ears will tingle under the influence of the hard things that will be said about me. All I can say on this matter is that I would be most happy to be scolded and derided and denounced, if the vehemence of the strong language only suggested to the hearers, even a suspicion that I must

have said something very like the truth about the delusive character of private judgment.

In the next chapter I mean to pursue this important subject farther, and to point out more definitely, by a few illustrations, into what vagaries and inconsistencies men are unwittingly led who prefer in their religious theories to be guided rather by the fallible teaching of self-commissioned and erring men, than by the Divine authority of the Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER IV.

## Vagaries of Private Judgment.

WHEN the gifted but unfortunate Chatterton was setting out for London to seek his fortune, and picturing to himself various plans for the attainment of his object, there was one which assumed a very distinct and practical shape, and which he hoped would stand between him and self-destruction. This was, in case all his literary efforts failed, to become a ranting preacher. "Credulity is," he wrote, "as potent a deity as ever, and a new sect may easily be devised."

Any smart fellow with a facile imagination and what is commonly called "the gift of the gab" might, as the Yankees say, "strike ile" if he made up his mind to work on the credulity of the public.

A school-fellow of mine in early days—a farmer's son, who cared far more for following the hunt, and bird-nesting and rabbit-shooting, than attempting to apply himself to the classics and the *gradus ad Parnassum*, used sometimes, in an outburst of savage impatience, to exclaim, "Well, if the worst comes to the worst, and I am doomed to cut short my present labors, I'll go to the far West, and turn black-cap preacher."

He was clever and observant, and could not shut his eyes to the temptation set before him in the inordinate craving of the uneducated non-Catholic public after novelty and excitement in religion.

I read the other day a most amusing book which has

had a great run in England as well as France,—“John Bull and his Island,”—which, the *Daily News* says, “hits off its subject to the life;” and found in the chapter, “The Religions of England,” abundant proof of this excessive credulity, which seems to invite with patronage and purse, the services of any unscrupulous *littérateur* who might be disposed to keep himself in order, and in proper long-tailed coat and white neck-tie, to solicit its favor.

The author says that there exist in England 183 religious sects, certified to the Registrar-General. This is not to be wondered at, when we consider how many, in that happy country of free thought and inquiry, pride themselves on the right of private judgment and worshipping God after their own fashion.

“Out of a population of 81,000,000 souls in the United Kingdom and the Colonies, 18,000,000 belong to the Anglican Church; 14,500,000 are Methodists; 13,500,000 Catholics; 10,250,000 Presbyterians; 8,000,000 Baptists; 6,000,000 Congregationalists; 1,000,000 Unitarians; and about 10,000,000 belong to different sects of less importance.” (p. 251.)

He then gives a complete list of the 183 religious sects; and in subsequent chapters “hits off” the remarkable features of some of these sects which seem to afford his readers features of special interest.

It will answer my purpose, in noting the vagaries of private judgment, to mark a few of these. It is not with any feeling of trifling over a grave subject that I do so. More in sorrow than in anger, much less with any feeling of scorn or contempt, do I take over a few proofs of the truly lamentable consequences, which fall heavily on the poor and ignorant, who will not have the Gospel

preached to them according to the wise plan ordained by our Divine Saviour.

I see by this statement, taken from the books of the Registrar-General, that the sect is still in existence which believes in the Divine visitation of Joanna Southcote, the prophetess of Exeter. She, as it is well known, founded, in the early part of the century, a religious sect named the Jumpers. She declared that the devil was everywhere, and that Christians should jump upon him. When the Jumpers assemble for worship, they say nothing, but jump to their hearts' content, and the higher they jump and the more heavily they come down on their invisible foe, the greater are their hopes of salvation.

How deep-seated must be this disease in the minds of the poor deluded followers of the Devonshire prophetess, which survived not only her own discovery of the silly dream that may have for a time fascinated her, but even to the present day, inspires many a well-meaning and pious old woman to look to her in the hope of a glorious resurrection!

There is another remarkable offspring of private judgment in the belief of the "Peculiar People." The fatalism of fanatic Arabs, who almost annihilated our trained troops, by reckless and daring charges, inspired by contempt of death, does not surpass the fatalism of the "Peculiar People." If they are brought to the verge of the grave by illness, they will not think of calling in a doctor. Their private judgment, founded on their own interpretation of Scripture, convinces them that to call in a medical man would be to insult God, and show that they had no confidence in His paternal care. "If it is the Lord's will that I should die, let His will be done. Nothing can save me; if it is His will that I should re-



cover, then He can save me without the help of any doctor."

If small-pox or cholera attacks the "Peculiar People," our legislators may find, that certain extravagances of private inspiration must be repressed with a stern hand. A visitation of this kind might help to convince the boastful toleration of the present day, that in the ages of Faith, when people, instructed by the Catholic Church, valued "the one thing necessary" more than mammon, rulers sometimes found it necessary to stamp out, by stern measures, a moral pestilence that threatened, like the Manichæan plague, from which these evils sprung, to annihilate society. Quite a flood of sentiment has been poured out over the persecuted Albigenses, the martyrs, it is said, of free thought and private judgment. That flood, however, would ill represent the tide of grief which spread throughout Christendom, when from perversions of the sacred text, sprung up in southern Europe some of the most debasing habits of paganism in its worst and most degrading forms.

Society of the present day, polished and refined to the very extreme of æstheticism, and indulgent to the absurdities of all beliefs, would raise a wail of horror, and cry aloud to Heaven for vengeance on the guilty, if it would learn from the detectives and medical men of our great cities, both of the New and Old World, something of the impious rites and practices which, like a horrid cancer, are poisoning the life-blood of those who have ceased to fear God and the effects of His wrath in the world to come.

We hear now a great deal about the Salvation Army and its Generals, its fortresses, its sieges, its battles, and its red-hot Gospel-shots, its reception of the Holy Spirit, etc. If these people were less blasphemous in their pub-

lic announcements, and endeavored by other means to enkindle and keep alight an enthusiasm against drink, one might look with an indulgent eye even on the capering and dancing and wild gesticulating of women in the public streets. But no thoughtful upholder of private judgment would, I believe, think of approving of the way in which the most sacred names are publicly profaned by the Salvationists.

When one reads at the end of stirring war-proclamations that "the Surgeon-General, Jesus Christ, will be present to attend to the sick and wounded," or "by order of King Jesus and Captain Cadman," or is informed by a huge placard that, "after spiking the enemies' cannon, the blood-and-fire soldiers will march in a certain direction, there halt and form in hollow square, and amid fire and blazes and the playing of the Hallelujah gallop, receive the Holy Ghost!" he cannot help shuddering at such excesses of profanity.

The worst evil, in all these self-inspired movements for effecting good, is that there is no legitimate authority to control them. A spirit of fanaticism is aroused, that clamors loudly for independent and unrestrained action. It will not have its ardor cooled by wise direction. It is inspired, say its defenders, by the Holy Spirit of God, and why should man dare attempt to repress it?

When a certain amount of success has crowned efforts like these, and the movement swells and spreads, self-glorification takes the reins of ordinary prudence into its inexperienced hands, and these quasi-inspired leaders of a social revolution are whirled, Phaeton-like, into the very focus of glaring pride, and, as far as their own spiritual welfare or that of others is concerned, are utterly consumed in their own apparent refulgence.

I would not say a word to cast ridicule or contempt on the noble efforts of Good Templary in the cause of temperance. The leaders in this movement, as far as I can judge of the few I know and esteem highly, are far removed from the extravagances of Salvationists. Neither they, nor their disciples will, I am quite certain, ever parade the highways, dancing, jumping, and gesticulating, and shouting at the top of their voices,—“cry out and bawl aloud, drink water and praise the Lord.” But there is another danger; and unless these leaders are prudent, they may see their most meritorious efforts for good rendered futile, by the uncontrolled spirit of private judgment. Encouraged by ever-growing numbers and large associations, irrepressible enthusiasts in the cause will commence to step out of the ranks, and steeped in ignorant self-conceit, and attributing to themselves the self-denying labors of the wise and good, who calmly and gently, and by their good example, have laid the foundations of all these blessings that attend on temperance, will, on every available opportunity, spout forth their own ill-judged and inconsiderate laudations of this cardinal virtue.

I heard from a much-honored dignitary of the Anglican Church, who died a short time ago in Grahamstown, a man well known by all who were acquainted with him to have been, through his life, almost a total abstainer, that he once, on invitation, attended a meeting in the cause of temperance. He went, not to speak, but to aid the cause by his presence, and to learn something about its progress. But when he heard some of these ignorant and irresponsible members to whom I have just alluded lash themselves into a fury against the crime of moderate drinking, and denounce those who, occasionally and in

all sobriety, enjoyed God's gifts, as the chief abettors of scandalous excess, he felt obliged to put in his protest against such monstrous assumptions of individual judgment. He assured me that, for attempting to curb this extravagant nonsense, he too, notwithstanding his well-known habits, was set down by many, who could scarcely restrain their indignation while he spoke, as one who was a bitter opponent of the movement.

Catholics, on their principles, cannot become members of an association of this kind which, founded on the religion of private judgment, either ignores the Church, or abuses its doctrine whenever it is convenient. Catholic bishops and priests may not speak in terms of unqualified laudation of a religious society which is the avowed enemy of what they firmly believe to be the one true Church of God.

But, apart from religious considerations, prudent and sensible men, Protestant as well as Catholic, will regard with apprehension a large organization which may so easily, by the imprudence of a few hot-headed members aspiring to the honor of half a dozen letters after their names, lead it into expressions of opinion that are revolting to common-sense, or into courses that are fraught with political danger to the community.

What I have said on Good Templary, and which I believe every intelligent man, who knows anything about the matter, will indorse, is only another proof of the danger of resisting or subverting legitimate authority.

The book, from which I have quoted a few extracts about remarkable vagaries of private judgment, mentions in its list of religious sects some that are new to me, and may be to most of my readers. I will note a few of these. There are amongst them the "Bryanites," who

receive the communion seated; the "Brethren," who practise no rites, and have no ministers, and who baptize each other, and declare that to preach the Gospel is to deny that the Saviour's work is finished. There are also the "Christian Eliasites;" the "Christian Israelites;" the "Christadelphians;" the "Campbellites," who propose to set aside all questions of dogma, and to establish the unity of the Church of the Saviour. There are the "Morrisonites," who proclaim that "the unpardonable sin" is a want of belief that Christ has by His death saved all men, past, present, or unborn; the "Glassites," into which members are admitted with a holy kiss, and who abstain from all animal food that has not been bled; the "Ranters," whose worship consists in jumping and clapping hands; the "Shakers," founded by Anne Lee, who clap their hands and jump and shout, until they fall to the ground exhausted and breathless. Those who are interested in the subject will find full particulars in an admirable little book called "Catholic Belief."

If one would care to see an amusing description of the earnest and zealous working of a few of the more remarkable of these modern private-judgment Christians, he will find it in the concluding chapter of Cardinal Newman's well-known story of "Loss and Gain." He will see there that even individual members spare no pains to secure proselytes, and I will add from what I have seen and read of these sects *ex uno disce omnes*. The members, one and all, are not satisfied with a mere sentimental opinion of their own rectitude, but are filled with a burning desire to convert, and reform, and so save from eternal misery, their unhappy Christian brethren who presume to differ from them.

There is no limit to human credulity when it will not



be guided and restrained by the Church; and, as the clever author of "John Bull and his Island" puts it, "The craze for religion in England, and among English people who are not Catholics, has come to be a mania." He wonders why some enterprising apostle of private judgment has not invented "Salvation Pills," and thinks an advertisement proclaiming their efficacy on hardened sinners would be a tremendous success.

Verily, if one were to announce that the only way to reach Heaven is to trudge along through the world on the hands and knees, there are many who would welcome the new Gospel, and perhaps comfort themselves against the derision of the sober-minded, by considering that they were thus giving a practical illustration of the truth of evolution.

It would be easy to pile up illustrations innumerable of the absurdities and impiety into which men have been carried at all times, even from the commencement of Christianity to the present day, when they abandoned the teaching of the Church for the charms of private judgment and individual inspiration.

Who has not heard of the monstrous excesses of Montanus, which, in the second century, disgraced the Christian name? Even in these early times the piety of the Faithful was shocked by exhibitions of devil-worship and invocation, such as amaze sensible Christians of our own day. There was table-turning then, as we know from Tertullian; and mediums, like Maximilla and Priscilla, guided by the spirit of darkness, led thousands of unwary souls to perdition.

Who that has read any history of the time of the so-called Reformation, whether Protestant or Catholic, is not familiar with the diabolical madness of some of the



fanatical enemies of the Church, who proclaimed that they were inspired by the Holy Ghost?

There was, for example, the notorious monster of iniquity, Bockhold, the tailor of Leyden, who proclaimed himself the "King of Sion," a veritable "Bluebeard," in the matter of murdering his eleven wives, and who only lacked the power to surpass, in iniquity and cruelty, the worst of the pagan emperors. If it be said that he was a madman, he could inspire his followers, who cannot all be supposed to be deprived of reason, with the religious frenzy which he declared came to him from the Spirit of God.

There was, too, the Anabaptist Herman, who was moved, he said, by the same Spirit, to declare himself the Messiah, and who preached the new gospel of rebellion and murder. "Kill the priests, kill all the magistrates in the world," he yelled, in the midst of his ranting discourses. And David George, who called himself the "True Son of God," and found thousands to believe that in him was to be perfected the Old and New Testament. These deluded wretches may have labored under a full conviction that they were inspired as well as Joanna Southcotte.

They who care for details of these aberrations caused by acting on the principle of private judgment, and of the names of the prophets and guides of multitudes during that awful time, will find a surfeit in the pages of Sleidan, Brandt, and Mosheim.

And let it not be imagined that it was only on the Continent of Europe that such characters exhibited their blatant ravings as the true Gospel. I may here mention, before I part with this revolting subject, that there was quite a crew of them in "merrie England:" Nicholas,

the founder of the Familists, or "Family of Love," Hacket and Arthington, and Coppinger and Venner, and, last but not least, George Fox, the shoemaker of Leicestershire, and his disciple James Naylor. When the last-named wretch was, by order of Parliament, flogged for his blasphemous exhibition in Bristol, he, as Echard and Neal tell us in their histories, permitted the fascinated women who followed him to kiss his feet and his wounds, and hail him as "The Prince of Peace," "The Rose of Sharon, the fairest of ten thousand."

But it may be objected that these, and many others, were only extraordinary cases of the abuse of a sound principle. It was only an excess of faith, superstition if you will, that led good men of excitable temperament into impiety, and blasphemy, and revolting crimes.

I answer, that the principle cannot be sound which, naturally and logically, produces such fruits, and must ever produce them, unless it is checked and controlled by the good sense, and prudence, and influence of men of ability who happen, by the circumstances of birth and education, to be mixed up with such associations.

If the principle is once fully admitted, that Faith is a special inspiration vouchsafed to certain individuals, and that it is an instantaneous illapse of God's spirit into their souls, by which they are sensibly convinced of their justification and election, it does not require any effort to see the fatal consequences to reason and feeling of such a conviction. Ignorant men and women, who are taught to satisfy their ardent religious cravings with stimulating food like this, and to set a supernatural value on a physical emotion like delirium, and are encouraged to work themselves up or allow themselves to be carried away by a sort of frenzy, must, if this sort of thing is not

checked by sage authority, end in becoming visionaries or maniacs, dangerous to society, in proportion to the influence they exercise on those around them. As one hysterical patient may, if allowed to shriek and cry aloud, communicate the nervous disease to all the female inmates of a crowded hospital, and convert its wards into so many bedlams, so, most certainly, will this emotional religion, excited to the extreme by sensational preaching, a wailing and piercing tone of voice, and thrilling hymns, drive the weak-minded into madness.

The history of revivals, all the world over, manifests this tendency. Many, under these influences, will imagine themselves endowed with spiritual gifts of the highest order, regard themselves as filled with the Holy Ghost, and transformed into the Deity Himself. That such effects are not more frequent is, I maintain, attributable only to accidental circumstances; or to the presence or control of strong-minded individuals, who, by their determined character, keep the religious *furor* within bounds, and are able to direct or subdue the storm which they have themselves perhaps contributed not a little to foment.

There is another objection worth considering. "Admitting," it may be said, "that there are certain dangers in religious excitement, and that people may thus be led into blasphemous and impious and revolting extremes, is there not some set-off against this danger, in the new spiritual life and fervor that is thus enkindled? Is there not a real power for good developed by the conviction of individual inspiration, which rouses the tepid and indifferent into active piety?"

I think the answer will at once suggest itself to the serious and thoughtful. Whatever is violent or excess-

ive in its action on the physical frame, or the mind, or the affections is not lasting; and it is invariably followed by a reaction. You may, of course, by a fervid appeal galvanize, as it were, a debased and hardened sinner, in whom the spiritual life is scarcely discernible, into something like vigorous activity. But the emotion will quickly pass away, if it be not sustained by a power more real than mere sentiment.

In the Catholic Church this is well known. An eloquent and zealous priest, filled with the spirit of his vocation, will often wake up the soul long slumbering in the fatal torpor of sin, to shame and regret. But his experience assures him, that even sincere and heart-felt emotion, revealing itself perhaps in tears and sobs, will be no guarantee of a real conversion unless the voice of God, speaking to the sinner through His appointed organ, be supported by sacramental grace.

Those who ridicule the Sacraments, and place their entire confidence, for the permanency of conversion, in the suggestions of private judgment and individual inspiration, are resting their hopes on the weak arm of the flesh, and on a belief that is only human. A real change of heart is the work of the Omnipotent God Himself, acting through the ordinary means appointed by His Divine Son to bring about and secure a real and lasting conversion.

Again I seem to hear another objection: "What is the use of dwelling on the many diversities of Christian belief, and the distortions which private judgment, swayed by extravagant notions of individual inspiration, has effected in the teaching of the Founder of Christianity? After all, Christians of every denomination look up to the one Christ as their great Master. All honor and rev-

erence Him as the Author and Finisher of 'our common Christianity.' Is there not something superior to mere particular dogma, and peculiar forms of worship, in this united homage? If some believe more and some less of what He has taught us, may it not be that certain portions of the Gospel have a special attraction for individuals; and if unqualified admiration for these portions of the Divine message, so absorbs the attention of different sects, as to shut out from their view other truths equally admirable, what is this but an expression of man's free choice unfettered by anything like coercion, and therefore more in accordance with man's natural diversity of taste and disposition, and the spontaneous expression of his homage? What can be conceived more beautiful than this grand feature, stamped on all the works of God throughout creation,—'unity in variety'? Two blades of grass are not in every respect alike. No two flowers, even on the same stem, bear an exact resemblance to each other. Children of the same parents are so rarely alike in the color of their eyes, or of the hair, or in entire conformity of feature, that perfect resemblance would excite amazement. This is in fact the grand distinction between the most perfectly finished works of men and those of nature. When cunning artists have produced 'a thing of beauty' that charms the public taste and creates a wide demand, elaborate machinery is invented to perpetuate this joy; and one of these prized articles is so exactly like another that the most practised eye cannot detect a shade of difference. Why should not the same ever-varying features, that constitute the charms of nature's every production, mark also the natural expression of unrestrained and individual Faith? And then, where is the essential difference of opinion in the fundamental



tenets of Christian belief, that one form of announcing it must be considered in direct opposition to another?"

There are many large-hearted and benevolent dispositions who love to reason in this way, and the practical outcome of their kindly speculations on religion is this: "That one form of Christianity is as good as another; and that if we are in earnest in accepting whatever commends itself specially to our choice, and treasure the pearl which we have found by our own individual study, amid the innumerable gems of heavenly beauty unfolded to us in Revelation, we are far more likely to be happy in this world, and the world to come, than if we were to spend our time in finding fault with each other's selection, or embittering our minds with uncharitable reflections."

It seems a pity to trample rudely on these flowers of fancy, and scatter these charming theories to the winds. But truth is, of its very nature, intolerant. There is but one true Faith, as there is but one God—"one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). And without this one Faith, "it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). We are not sent into this world to pick, and choose, and please ourselves, by selecting certain portions of the Divine teaching. Christ wished, that those who were to announce His law, should teach all things whatsoever He commanded them, and He pronounces a terrible decree against those who will not accept His doctrine in all its plenitude: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16).

As he has solemnly declared by the mouth of His Apostle, in reference to the precepts of the moral law, that "those who offend in one shall become guilty of all" (James ii. 10), so must it be understood in reference to Faith. As to transgress, in a grave matter, one pre-



cept of the moral law will as effectually exclude the guilty and unrepentant from Heaven as if they had violated the whole code; so will they be condemned who, knowing that every dogma of Faith rests on the truth of God, have dared wilfully and deliberately to call this truth into question even on a single point.

Men who amuse their kindly dispositions with pretty conceits like those mentioned in the objection I am combating seem to forget, that it rests not with men, but with God and His Infallible Church, to lay down the conditions of salvation. As to every Christian sect honoring Christ in its own peculiar way, it seems a strange way of honoring Him, to deny His divinity, or to declare that any part of the Divine message exceeds the bounds of credibility.

Men would feel deeply aggrieved and insulted, if they were charged with breaking their word solemnly pledged, or accused of making lying promises. Either it is a fact that Christ promised to preserve the teaching Church from error, by His own abiding presence and the unfailing guidance of the Holy Ghost, or He did not. If He did, and the Church at any time erred in its teaching, then He has clearly violated a solemn compact, and cannot therefore be the God of Truth. If He never made any promise of the kind, then the whole Catholic Church from the beginning, and all Christendom, for fifteen hundred years, attributed a meaning to His words, which they could not bear; and hence there is no security in interpreting the Divine Revelation. Where an error so grave, affecting, as it does, the very basis of Divine Faith, could have been so universal and so lasting, it would be absurd to maintain that there is no fear of serious error in individual or private judgment.

If the infallibility of the Church is not a fundamental dogma, one is at a loss to conceive what is meant by the expression "fundamental." Apart from the fact that it is altogether beyond the scope of man's right to pronounce what is or what is not fundamental in doctrine, announced to the world by its Creator and its God, that dogma evidently lies at the bottom of all revealed truth, which alone can determine with certainty its Divine character. If there is no such thing as an Infallible Church to explain the true meaning of the Word of God, then there is no Divine teaching whatever. All knowledge of God that is possible in this supposition, is merely human speculation. We are consequently left, by the Being who alone has a right to lay down the conditions of salvation, and who has, according to the general admission of all Christians, made Faith the most important of them all, without the possibility of complying with any of these conditions.

Whoever receives the mystery of the Incarnation in all its plenitude, as a fixed dogma of Divine Faith, can see at a glance, that true Faith in the Blessed Eucharist is the means by which we are enabled individually to apply to ourselves the fruits of this mystery. In the Blessed Eucharist, or the Holy Communion, we are made one with Christ: we therein receive the participation of the Divine life, and may hope to be raised up on the last day. If the true meaning of this mystery is not that always given and clearly taught by the Catholic Church; if there is no such thing as a Real Presence, or if it does not much matter whether there is or is not; if it does not signify anything whether we eat bread and drink wine in memory of Christ, or eat His flesh and drink His

blood in the Catholic sense, and there is no certain way of settling this all-important difficulty,—then, whether we like it or not, we are forced into the position taken by unbelievers in Revelation. To be consistent, we must say that *all* that was once firmly believed may be a mere allegory, or an oriental dream, a mere invention of man, founded on a complete misunderstanding of the sublime teaching of the “great Philosopher Christ.”

I believe I am not exaggerating the cogency of the denial of Infallibility in the least. And, of course, the practical conclusion to which we are forced by private judgment is simply this: that the sooner all denominations of Christians who are not Catholics, give up their delusions, the better. They should, as reasonable beings bound by no obligation to receive God’s teaching, since they can only guess at His meaning, settle down quietly to natural Theism, or Deism, or what is called “the Religion of Humanity.” This inevitable and logical conclusion from the premises of private judgment will be the best for their individual comfort, and the material prosperity of the only world of which we can know anything with positive certainty.

In the mean time, while the busy world is thus advancing towards Rationalism or Agnosticism, or any other *ism* that will amuse its fancies, and turning its back on Christ, we Catholics can well imagine that the compassionate Saviour, with heart bruised and broken at the world’s ingratitude, says to us, “Will you also go away?” It is our greatest comfort that, without a moment’s hesitation, we, clinging to the Infallible Church, can say with the Apostle chosen to be its Head forever on earth, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of

eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (John vi. 68, 69, 70).

In the next chapter, I purpose, in continuance of this important subject, to show, that in Catholic Christianity we possess a firm basis for reasonable Faith; and that outside the teaching of the Church there can exist only, in regard to "the one thing necessary," mere vague speculation or superstitious credulity.

## CHAPTER V.

## Reasonable Faith and Non-Catholic Credulity.

“**H**UMANUM est errare,” or the axiom that it is only natural for man to fall into mistakes, is often quoted to show that the dogma of a human infallible guide is not to be looked for, or taken into account, in considering the religious question. No man, it is argued, is infallible ; therefore no assembly of men, or no combination of individual opinions, can establish the absolute certainty of any doctrine. But a distinction at once suggests itself. If men are not directed in their judgment of a doctrine by the spirit of truth, granted, or let the argument pass. But if there are unquestionable proofs of this supernatural guidance, then the unerring testimony of God can manifest itself by the mouth of even one individual. All Christians are united in receiving, as positive and certain truth, the declarations of the inspired prophets. When the course of events, hundreds of years after the announcement of an inspired prophet, made clear as day the meaning of the prophetic words, so that those who deny the prophecy can controvert it only on the ground that it was subsequent to the event supposed to be predicted, it is evident that the God of truth has spoken through His inspired servant.

All the prophecies bearing on the advent and life and sufferings of the Messiah are of this incontrovertible character. We can meditate on the pictures of the Passion of our Divine Lord drawn by the hand of Isaias

or Jeremias, as on those presented to us in the history of the Evangelists. We behold the cruel scourging, so expressly set before us in the words of the royal prophet: *supra dorsum meum, fabricaverunt* (Ps. cxxviii. 3)—They have wrought or worked, as smiths striking on the anvil with heavy hammers, on my back: as when we read of the whole band of soldiers being gathered together, for this inhuman torture, in the hall of Pilate. And no visions vouchsafed to holy contemplatives of the meek patience of the Man-God, under this punishment, can surpass in description the sublime words of Isaias: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth" (Isaias liii. 7). No wonder that the first philosophic enemies of Christianity, reading in the Prophets all the minute circumstances of the death-thirst, the casting of the dice for the garments, the piercing of the spear, the body rent and torn, so that the bones could be numbered, the digging out of the wounds in the hands and feet, and other details of the sacred Passion, should have been forced to declare, that all these circumstances, so exactly described, could only have been derived from eye-witnesses of the cruel tragedy.

Individual men enlightened by the Holy Spirit saw these things more vividly than the crowds who actually witnessed them in the flesh: and therefore, I say, Christians of all denominations concur in the belief that these inspired men were infallible, just as they agree in believing, that the minds and hands of the Evangelists and the sacred writers were guided by the unerring spirit of God.

It is possible, therefore, from the very fact of these admitted inspirations, that weak fallible men may, when it



pleases God, be raised above the possibility of self-deception.

And if it is absolutely certain, that a solemn promise was given by the Redeemer, that they who were sent and commissioned to teach His law were, to the end of all things in this world, to be guided and assisted, in their office of teaching, by the same Holy Spirit, their utterances, too, could not deceive us.

There is no weight, therefore, *a priori* in any axiom accepted by mankind regarding the inherent fallibility of men, taken individually or collectively, that can militate against the Catholic principle. If God willed to make even the most feeble instruments proof against the weakness of fallible human testimony, He could really effect what He willed. The infallibility consequently of human teachers, under certain circumstances, can be as assured as Divine truth itself.

This point being disposed of, we can reasonably consider the claim of the Catholic Church to teach mankind, with unfailing certainty, the true meaning of every word of the Divine message contained in either the written word, or the traditions of those who learned the truth from the lips of the son of God Himself.

It seems a very simple way to disprove all testimony of a supernatural fact, by arguing that there can be nothing of a supernatural character in this world of fixed and stable laws. But if only one supernatural fact can be attested, by human testimony so strong, that to doubt it would be to suppose as great, or greater, a departure from the ordinary laws that govern our being, than that which is implied in the fact itself, the whole argument against the supernatural fact is upheaved from its very foundations. That which is absolutely impossible can never

come to pass, under any circumstances whatever. If it is evident that an immense multitude of eye-witnesses, who cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be supposed to have a common motive to deceive, unite in declaring that a certain thing has taken place, apparently repugnant to all known experience, then if they are deceived, there is nothing certain in this world. We may doubt even our own existence, and accept the philosophy of Berkeley pure and simple. Berkeley maintained that there was no such thing as matter, because the sensations which prove to us the existence of matter may, like the dreams of the delirious, be purely imaginary.

The best answer to this ingenious system of philosophy is that of Lord Byron: "If Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter, 'twas no matter what Bishop Berkeley said."

Such quasi-philosophy is mere subtle phraseology that mocks common-sense. It is just the same with regard to Infallibility. Men who are opposed to the principle of Catholic Faith may scout, in the strongest language, the bare notion of infallible guidance; but their fiercest denunciations of the principle melt away, like mist before the sunbeam, when it is as evident as two and two make four, that even one prophecy has been literally and exactly fulfilled. Prophecy, or the fore-telling, hundreds of years before the actual occurrence of the event, something which could not by any human calculation be guessed at, can be accounted for only by a revelation on the part of the great Being who knows all things. The occurrence of the event, just as it was predicted, proves that the human being who declared that it should happen was, in this matter, protected from error by infallible guidance. Infallibility is therefore possible.

I have dwelt upon this point, because it is *the* point so much insisted on at the present day, as the decisive test against anything of a supernatural character in this world. These things, prophecy, miracles, infallibility, are directly opposed to what we know of human power; therefore, it is argued, they cannot be proved by evidence itself.

The old argument of Hume, and men of his school, that physical and moral evidence are of so different a nature, that there can be no comparison between them, and that the evidence of experience must, of its nature, subvert the very foundations of the most perfect human testimony, is one of these fallacies, which would never be accepted as sound reasoning, but for the immense influence of blind and deep-seated prejudice.

Now starting from this point, that God may, when He pleases, so completely overrule our natural tendency to self-deception as, by human organs, to make His law stronger in its influence over our convictions, and clearer in its claims on our obedience, than any evident obligation imposed on us by our fellow-men, we see at once the solid basis of Catholic teaching.

It is all reducible to this: can we certainly, and beyond all doubt, know that Infinite truth has unfolded itself to us, and can God so provide as to secure us from all deception in beholding this truth, and knowing, with absolute certainty, its full meaning? If so, we can have Faith; if not, Faith in the proper sense of the word is impossible. But I have proved that He can, and I have also proved that He has actually, by the clearest promises, undertaken to secure for all who will accept His arrangements the acquisition of this truth, as He wills us to understand it. Therefore, all without exception—the ignorant as well as the learned—have it within their power

to know, with infallible certainty, everything that He has required to be known and believed in order to salvation.

This is the ground of the Catholic Rule of Faith, sound, solid, and irrefragable. They who accept the conditions and the state of authoritative teaching which He established when He commissioned His Apostles, and those who were to succeed them in the office of teaching, to perform this duty to the end of time, may believe, with full and entire confidence, what is thus conveyed to them. To those who reject this authoritative teaching, Divine Faith is an absolute impossibility.

I do not for a moment mean to say that there may not be, outside the Catholic fold, a pious Faith, a well-meaning and a trusting Faith; but I maintain, that except on Catholic principles, there can be no reasonable or logical Faith.

No one with a mind trained like that of Mary Somerville, for instance, could derive comfort and calm fortitude from a belief that is not built on the clear and express and certain meaning of the Divine message. A mind like hers would, no doubt, find delight in reading the sacred Scriptures, and be charmed with "those compositions which even humanly considered," as Cardinal Newman puts it, "are amongst the most sublime and beautiful ever written;" but a mere emotional Faith like this, if it may properly be called Faith at all, could not possibly deliver a mind like hers from the terrors and anxieties involved in the dark future.

I have often met men to whom I looked up with respect and almost veneration for their blameless lives and well-known honor and uprightness, and heard them speak in language that thrilled my heart, by the expression of

the joy and consolation which they had derived from the pious study of the Bible.

There is before me now the vision of a fine old gentleman, who faithfully served his country and the cause of his co-religionists, and was universally respected; and his words, when I met him for the last time, as, at the age of fourscore and ten, he was bending towards his last home, will ever live in my remembrance. "I am waiting for the Master's call." He was what his fellow-Methodists would call "a God-fearing man, full of years, and ripe for glory." It never entered into his mind, perhaps, to doubt the security of his Faith, any more than it did, according to the principles in which he had been trained, to doubt that he had found peace, and was acceptable to God. His was, beyond doubt, a pious Faith; and his good will may, before the end, have securely bound him to the Rock of Ages. What we Catholics must regard, according to the teaching of the Church, presumption and a dangerous illusion, may have been, in his case, only the simple exaggeration of pious sentiment and trusting hope in the infinite merits of his Saviour. We may therefore well believe, that these sentiments, fondly cherished for many years, had developed in his soul that real love for God which wins to itself, in spite of many imperfections, the Divine Love in return,—"I love those who love me,"—and that the one true Faith, "without which it is impossible to please God," was infused into him by an extraordinary grace. I could not help praying for the happy repose of his soul, even though during life he would probably have regarded such prayer as a poor service, and a lamentable superstition.

I saw once, on a tombstone in the Catholic cemetery



of Grahamstown, "He was one of the old settlers, may their souls rest in peace, Amen;" and I wondered if the descendants of these worthy folk, who trusted for their salvation in the standards drawn up by the Rev. John Wesley, could forgive this expression of simple Catholic Faith and good will to all men. I dare say not. They would probably shrug their shoulders in pity or contempt for an expression not to be found in their human interpretation of the Gospel.

I will hope, however, that my venerable friend will not think the worse of me if my short prayer, well meant at any rate, helped him to pass the dread ordeal of judgment.

It is, I know, extremely difficult to treat of the necessity of true Faith in order to please God, and to set the matter plainly before the public, without hurting the tender susceptibilities which have been fed and nursed amid the superstitions and credulity of mere human standards of religion. But, in a work of this kind, the plain truth must be stated, for "woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16). And I cannot repeat too frequently that it is not human standards, or the plan of belief deduced from the sacred Scriptures by the private judgment of fallible men, that fixes the conditions of salvation. It is the will of God alone, expressed either in His written or unwritten Word, and explained in its true sense by the divinely appointed teacher, that can give any one security in a matter of so great importance.

Pious sentiment may, from the force of habit, grow into something like a conviction, and enable good old people, and young and fervent souls, to end their days in peace: but "not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth



the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.)

I dare say it will appear to many, that the heading of this chapter, and the development of the subject, seem a curious "turning of the tables." One of the most ordinary charges against Papists is, that they are weak-minded, credulous, and superstitious. When the question of credulity and superstition is calmly considered, it will be found to be quite the other way. Catholics ground their Faith on reasonable and certain premises; they who reject authoritative teaching are, whatever they may fancy, the veritable slaves of mere human opinions, and the blind votaries of canting sentiment and pious wordiness.

I remember well a common saying of the learned Bishop who preceded me in this vicariate. Whenever his profound knowledge of Catholic truth, whether dogmatic, moral, or historical, was outraged by ignorant assumptions and violent charges against the Church, he used to declare as a sort of axiom which had fixed itself in his mind,—“Be sure that the people who make these unfounded charges are only betraying their own weaknesses.”

So it is here. They who call Catholics superstitious and credulous, are themselves the most credulous and superstitious of human beings. It was this telling argument which St. Paul applied to the proud philosophers of Athens, when, rebutting the charge urged by them against the superstitions of Christians, he called attention to their worship of the “unknown God,” and pointed to the altar bearing this inscription, as an evident proof that they of all men were the most superstitious. (Acts xvii. 22.)

These strong expressions, so continually applied to Catholics, and the common prejudice, so engrained in the minds of the shrewd men of the world against Catholics, that even gentlemen by education, and wealth, and position, do not hesitate to say to their Catholic friends, "You Catholics will believe anything," have their origin only in wrong ideas about Divine Faith. Faith of this kind, the only true Faith, comes not from the evidence of sense, or from the close study of material phenomena, or from the conclusions of experience; it comes from the Word of God, not the mere letter which contains it, but from the true meaning conveyed in these vehicles of thought.

St. Paul declares, that the Jews were governed by sight, and the pagan Gentiles by reason; but that neither went simply by Faith. And the Apostle dwells on what was unknown to the world before Christianity, as a motive of belief—"The obedience of Faith," and "The foolishness of preaching" (2 Cor. ix. 13; 1 Cor. i. 21). Cardinal Newman puts the point with such marvellous power, that I set aside the current of my own thoughts, to quote his words:

"The Apostles did not rest their cause on argument, they did not rely on eloquence, wisdom, or reputation; nay, nor did they make miracles necessary to the enforcement of their claims. They did not resolve Faith into sight and reason; they contrasted it with both, and bade their hearers believe, sometimes in spite, sometimes in default, sometimes in aid, of sight and reason. They came as commissioned from Him "whom they ignorantly worshipped," and declared that mankind was a guilty and outcast race; that sin was misery; that the world was a snare; that life was a shadow; that God was

everlasting, and that His law was holy and true, and its sanctions certain and terrible; that He also was all-merciful; that He had appointed a Mediator between Him and them, who had removed all obstacles, and was desirous to restore them, and that He had sent themselves to explain how. They said, that that Mediator had come and gone; but had left behind Him what was to be His representative till the end of all things, His mystical Body, the Church, in joining which lay the salvation of the world." ("Lectures on Justification," p. 270.)

"Thus the Apostles tamed the pagan breast;  
They argued not, but preached, and conscience did the rest."

It was no argumentative belief which they announced, but by their authority and their high commission, they forced their hearers either to receive the Word which they preached, or simply to reject it. If those whom they addressed yielded the submission, and obedience, and undoubting assent of entire belief in their words, they received them into the body of the faithful. If, on the other hand, any rejected the Divine message, the Apostles left them to their hopeless incredulity.

It is evident, from the very nature of the Divine Revelation, that voluntary acceptance in this simple unquestioning way, is the very essence of the Faith preached in the beginning of the Church. The Apostles preached what seemed "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness:" but they declared, that it was by this very foolishness of their preaching, that the great God designed to save His erring and fallen creatures.

If this notion of Faith is compared with the belief of Christians who are not Catholics, at the present day, how

striking is the contrast! It is, as I have already said, the proud boast of Protestant Christians, that they search even into the mysteries of the Divine Revelation, and that they will believe only whatever parts of this Revelation commend themselves to their approval. They may give a sort of adhesion to this or that truth,—admit, for instance, the Incarnation, always on condition that this mystery is not pressed on their acceptance in its full and obvious meaning. They will allow that Christ is a being partly God and partly man, but reserve to themselves the right of questioning or doubting, or absolutely denying, that Mary is the Mother of God; or that the God-Man really suffered and died in His human nature, or that there are really three Persons in God or that the wicked shall go into everlasting fire.

What becomes of “the obedience of the Faith” in these dispositions? This picking, and choosing, and subjecting truths, that are manifestly beyond the reach of reason, to what is called common-sense, is simply subjecting the Word of God to the digestion of human reason, and worshipping, with the abject superstition of degraded paganism, the miserable residue of earthy stuff, after it has been moulded or fashioned to a shape that pleases the passing fancy of the hour.

Here is credulity in its most debasing form. Men proclaiming loudly that they are far above the contempt and ridicule which an unbelieving world heaps on Catholic Faith, while they are, like silly children, amusing their ever-changing caprices, in decking out in many-colored garments the idol that charms them.

I have heard of the poor ignorant Hindoo, who takes his god to the banks of the sacred river and washes the object of his devotion, over and over again, with marvel-

lous patience, when mischief-loving youngsters watch the opportunity of defiling it with well-directed volleys of mud and dirt. It is a pitiful spectacle. But is it less pitiful, to the mind that rises above the mists of passion and prejudice, and from the solid ground of Catholic Faith, contemplates the transformations of mere human religions as they are decked out and adorned with ornaments borrowed from the Gospel?

Catholics will believe anything, no matter how absurd, it is confidently stated by the enemies of the Church. No; they will believe nothing, with the full assent of Faith, but what is set before them by the teaching of the Infallible Church, which our Divine Lord commands us to hear and obey.

They may be disposed, and every Catholic is disposed, to receive with reverence everything he hears on good authority of the wonderful condescension of the Divine manifestations, that so often reward simple, docile Faith. Meditating constantly on the great mysteries unfolded in the grand fundamental truth that the Everlasting God became flesh and shared our sorrows; accustomed from his earliest years by the teaching of a pious mother, and by the pictures and symbols which are so constantly used in the education of Catholics, to realize to himself the mysteries of the life, and passion, and death of our Divine Lord, he is trained not to wonder at any mark of this infinite condescension to His faithful servants which may be manifested from time to time. It is only, he says within himself, what one might hope for from a love that never changes nor is altered in its intensity. He thinks of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, and of the tender relations that bind forever the Divine Redeemer to His Virgin Mother, and is there-



fore not surprised that special graces are bestowed on those who show their loving adoration for Him, by honoring her with a constant devotion. She, by her free consent, enabled Him to display the length and breadth and depth of His mercy towards mankind. The pious Catholic loves to contemplate the helpless Child in the arms of the young mother, and to imagine to himself how confidently the Child, who was God, lay upon her bosom. He knows that if the prayer of a just man availeth much, her prayers to her Divine Son, must be most efficacious. Knowing that there is joy in Heaven even for one sinner that doeth penance, and that Mary, full of that grace and love which is the air of Heaven, ardently desires the conversion of sinners, he is not amazed when he hears that the Blessed Virgin has manifested herself to children, and, through them, has sent a kindly warning to those who, by their impiety, and blasphemy, and riotous excesses, are crucifying again the Son of God, and, by their heartless mockery of His sufferings, sadden the Sacred Heart and cast a gloom over the joy of the Angels. "What wonder is it?" he exclaims, as he hears of extraordinary manifestations like this, "it is only what might be expected after all from the infinite mercy of God our Saviour, and from her who co-operated, as far as a creature could, in the reparation for sin, as she stood at the foot of the cross."

The Faith of a Catholic is not called upon to believe these wonders. He receives them with a natural instinct towards belief, that has been engendered in him by Faith. He does not take upon himself to decide whether what is reported far and wide as having really happened is correct or not. It does not much concern him. It may be quite true; knowing what we know by Faith



of God's love for His wayward children, and how the heart of Mary must beat in unison with the Sacred Heart, it is, he believes, more than probable. No one can say, until the ecclesiastical authorities have made a rigid examination and submitted it to the Head of the Church. If the Holy Father will give his sanction to devotions that have their origin in the supposed event, or encourages the building of churches and sanctuaries on the spot where the apparition showed itself, then it is almost certain that the Holy Father himself believes what has been circulated through the Church. But whether this sort of indirect approval is given or not, no Catholic for a moment imagines that he is bound to exercise his Faith about it. It has nothing more to do with the Deposit of truth confided to the Apostles and the Church, than to serve as an illustration of the consoling doctrines preserved therein by the watchful care of the Holy Ghost.

I remember once asking the first Bishop of the Eastern Vicariate, what could be the reason of the miracle of St. Januarius, so much venerated in southern Italy. I had previously read the authenticated account of this miracle, considered attentively what Sir Humphry Davy said about it, and spoken with Protestant gentlemen who had witnessed it. The expression of one of these,—an Anglican minister of high position, who was telling me what he had seen, and who, in reply to my question, “Did you really believe that the blood of the martyred Bishop was liquefied in this miraculous manner?” said: “Did I believe it? It would be too dreadful to imagine for a moment the possibility of deception,”—made a strong impression on my mind. I asked the Bishop the question mentioned above, with no doubt

whatever that all I had read and heard about this extraordinary fact was true. After gently pointing out to me the unreasonableness of asking why the great God should or should not do anything He pleased in His own world, he said that one might easily see a reason for a special manifestation, amongst people so weak and so influenced by stormy passions, ever warring against Faith, and at the same time so childlike in the simplicity of their Faith. "It is only," he continued, "what we might naturally expect from the infinite goodness of God, who wills "that none should perish, but that all should be converted and live."

This, according to Protestant notions, is rank superstition. I would say, on the contrary, with the good Bishop, It is only the instinct of real Faith, that feeds itself on the contemplation of our Divine Saviour's love.

But, as I have already said, the Catholic Church does not require her children to believe, with anything like Divine Faith, these and similar wonders of which we hear so frequently. The substance of Faith is the everlasting and unchanging truth, announced in the first Revelation made to man in the garden of Paradise, continued through the Patriarchs and Prophets, and confirmed by the teaching of our Divine Lord. Faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not" (Heb. xi. 1), is ever ancient and ever new. It is gradually unfolding itself, as the world grows colder and more indifferent to the things of God. Its last manifestation is the wonderfully consoling doctrine of the Sacred Heart, which, though comparatively new in its present development, was ever included in the profound mystery of God's love for sinful man.

I fancy I hear the exclamations of wonder which Protestants will give way to, at my credulity, when they read what I have written about the reverence which good Catholics should pay to accounts of supernatural manifestations. They have made up their minds, at least on one point connected with religion, that such things cannot possibly be. The enlightenment of this age, they boast, has effectually disposed of all such silly pretensions; and they add, whatever may be said of the other claims of Catholic Christianity to be the one true religion, these claims are all overwhelmed in the contemptible rubbish of the worn-out legends of the dark ages.

I admit at once, that Protestants never think of looking for a miraculous interposition in their favor. How could they? The wretched apostates who rebelled against the Church in the sixteenth century tried, it is said, to play at miracles. Luther and Calvin made certain attempts, which covered them with the ridicule of Catholics, and excited the shame and confusion of their own disciples. Some of the fanatics mentioned in the fourth chapter, and men and women of the same stamp, occasionally tried the same game, but found it would not answer. Pious enthusiasts, belonging to the ranks of emotional Christianity, tell strange things of their experiences. But these imagined ecstasies, this sensible finding of peace, this instantaneous sanctification by the palpable effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit, may be, if they are really felt, indications of the workings of a lying spirit, who can transform himself into an angel of light.

At any rate, such sensations are merely subjective. Wild gestures, convulsions, hysterical cries, can scarcely be regarded, by sober-minded people, as "signs and portents" meant by the Almighty for our edification.

And so we may consider it as a fixed thing that Protestants have nothing practically to do with miracles and supernatural manifestations. Such things, on their own notions of religion and the principles their leaders have laid down, have passed away long ago, and they can know nothing about them. When Dr. Döllinger, with his grim humor, says that the only miracle to which Luther could point, as a proof of his extraordinary mission, was that bad priests married, and a number of restless spirits left their convents, all that need be said on this subject is pretty well summed up in these few words of the German historian, who of all living men knows most of the doings of that wild revolutionary time.

If determined unbelievers in the supernatural were present at any of these wonderful things recounted by the learned Laserre, once as sceptical as any of them, but converted by his own miraculous cure, and which, he says, are constantly taking place at the grotto of Lourdes, they would disbelieve their own eyes, and probably entertain grave anxieties about losing their reason.

I fancy I hear the exclamation of a thoroughly orthodox Protestant, whose patience has been severely tried by what I have written on this subject—"Quite so; such a witness should at once subject himself to medical treatment, or have himself locked up in a mad-house, when he felt the first symptom of this craze."

I cannot help feeling amused, as I picture to myself this inflexible incredulity. It is quite on a par with the indignation and rage of the scientists when allusion is made by any of their friends to the merciful interposition of Providence in rescuing them from appalling danger, or a malady that seemed beyond the reach of medical skill.

I have before my mental vision a pompous old doctor, who, when I was a child, used to attract my attention by the peculiarities of his majestic bearing. He was, I afterwards learned, "the prophet and the guide" of a select circle in my native town, who were taught by him to ridicule the notion of a personal God, and to amuse themselves with the interesting phenomena of vulgar piety. "Well, my good woman," he would say to a poor Catholic who had applied to him for medical relief in severe illness, "how do you feel to-day?" "Oh, thanks be to God, ever so much better." The reply was worthy of the man, and it was in a manner stereotyped,— "Thank your good doctor, and not your God." Here was scientific wisdom; but the wisdom of these sages "is foolishness with God," and revolting in its stupid pride to the instincts of a Christian child.

I wonder the common-sense of those who are always sneering at the simple Faith of Catholics, does not prompt them to examine into the authentic evidence of even one miraculous cure.

The story is well known of the intelligent Protestant, who, urged by this natural impulse to find out if there was any real truth in such things, obtained the official papers required at the Beatification or Canonization of a Saint. He carefully went through the voluminous records, which included the testimony of physicians who had examined into the circumstances of an alleged miracle, not omitting the cross-examination of the official known as the "devil's advocate." When he had conscientiously studied the case, and satisfied himself that certainly there were solid grounds for believing that a miracle had really taken place in this instance, he exclaimed, "Oh, if the Church of Rome thus keenly sifted



every story of miraculous interposition, there would be an end of all the absurd and ridiculous old-woman tales of credulous piety." The case, however, he was informed, did not satisfy those appointed to investigate it, and had been rejected, as not proved, by the Congregation appointed to sit in judgment on the evidence.

Of course it will be said that this is a pure invention; but it is so easy for any scholar to consult the work of Benedict XIV., "*De Canonizatione*," which lays down the rules to be strictly followed in these investigations, that I cannot help feeling amazed and shocked at the want of candor and simple justice which educated Protestants, almost without exception, display on this subject.

When it is considered, however, that if one miracle is satisfactorily proved, the whole accumulation of learned and ingenious arguments against the possibility of miracles, and the mistake of the Church in encouraging belief in such special manifestations of a loving and ever-watchful Providence, breaks down altogether; and that it is an axiom in sound reasoning, "*Ab actu ad posse valet consecutio*,"—or that we can reason fairly from a fact to the possibility of the same,—we need not wonder that they who have obstinately made up their minds to scout the bare idea of a miracle cannot be moved beyond the magic circle within which they have firmly intrenched themselves.

It is as though they had yielded to silly fears, and, like the wizards and magicians of old times, shut themselves in by barriers that bid defiance to every assault of the supernatural.

There is an extreme even in shrewd matter-of-fact sagacity. A man may overreach himself by aiming at superhuman cunning, and prove himself an ass by miss-



ing splendid opportunities. How often is the wisdom of this world outdone by simple, humble, and childlike Faith that, springing from the healthy growth of infallible certainty, secures for itself a peace of mind which "surpasseth all understanding" !

While the proud who despise this teaching are left to wander hopelessly amid the mazes and maddening confusion of doubt and perplexity, simple souls step in and win the great gift of Divine Faith, the jewel beyond all price.

In the next chapter, I mean to pursue this subject farther, and to discuss calmly, and I hope without boring my readers, a branch of it, which, to my mind, is *the* great and practical question affecting religious belief at the present day,—whether it is more reasonable to accept Revelation on Catholic principles, involving, as it does, "the obedience of Faith" and what the world calls "foolishness," or to condemn one's self to restless and never-ending doubt, and its natural result, hopeless, dark, and despairing unbelief.

## CHAPTER VI.

## "The Pride of Life."

IN the beautiful story of *Fabiola* there is a most touching description of the parting scene between the noble Roman lady and St. Agnes. The youthful virgin, soon to add the crown of martyrdom to the robe of angelical purity, wins a promise from her cousin that she will seek instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. She tells *Fabiola* that a cloud of gloomy shadow, the shade of death, hangs over all her splendid gifts of intellect, and refined culture, and high moral feeling; and that this cloud can be effaced only by the water of Baptism. The reply of *Fabiola* contains in itself the point on which will turn this chapter—"And shall I lose all that you have just prized in me?"

This is to my mind the sum and substance of the insurmountable difficulty which shuts out so many pure and gifted souls from the one true fold.

"What!" exclaims the noble-minded unbeliever in anything but his own cherished creations of a beautiful ideal, the elaboration perhaps of years of patient study and profound reflection, "must I abandon this best part of myself, which has sustained me during so many trials and temptations, and kept before me the dignity of a rational being framed, as Christians say, according to the Divine image, and bow down before puerilities and trifles that shock my reason?" "Must I," says the Christian who trusts in his own private judgment, "become again a

child, and lisp, in language that I cannot understand, the accents of a mystic worship that seems to mock my intelligence, and share in rites that can gratify only the superstitious cravings of an ignorant herd? Never: better far the gloom and darkness and blank desolation of even total destruction after death, or the possible terrors of eternal woe, than bind myself irrevocably to a creed which forbids the exercise of free-thought, and overwhelms every aspiration towards the bright gleams that have won my admiration and enthralled my existence.”

This is, I must confess, a sore temptation. And how I shall help the brave and good to overcome it, seems to me an undertaking beyond my feeble powers. I think of the primeval trial of our race, and the whisperings of the astute enemy who knows our weakness, and I seem to shrink within myself as I hear the mocking cry, “Ye shall be as gods,” and behold the spirit of our first father, even when the breath of God sent the blood sparkling through his veins, and our first mother fresh-moulded by the same God, sinking under the delirium-exciting charm. God help us! How can we hope, when Grace is undesired, and the prayer that might obtain it regarded as something degrading, to cope with this fascination?

Yet still I hope against hope, and believe that, with the Divine assistance, Faith can present a glimpse at least of saving truth, and point the way at any rate to those who really desire “to hear the Word of God and keep it.”

I know that there are many who value their eternal salvation above all earthly treasures; and who, though not Catholics in their external profession, set their hearts earnestly on the goal which the Saints of the Church kept

ever before their eyes. They would, I believe, die as willingly as the saintly Agnes, to win the crown of a glorious immortality: and it may be that, in their soul-harrowing doubts and perplexities, they will catch at this weak raft which I venture to cast from my mind on the surging and angry waters of distracting unbelief. God is good, and patient, and long-suffering, and He, I know, will bless every effort, no matter how apparently hopeless, that is directed to the salvation of souls purchased by the precious blood of our Divine Redeemer.

I may as well meet at once the difficulty plainly that stares me in the face. Generous and exalted souls, who have no real knowledge of Catholic doctrine, but have now and then cast a glance in the direction of Catholic morality, as it has been revealed to them in the lives and habits of Catholic friends, say within themselves something like this: "Here are people whom we esteem and love; they are faithful to their creed and to the practices which it enjoins. They would suffer anything, no matter how grievous, rather than swerve, by one jot or tittle, from the way pointed out to them by their pastors. They are superior to human respect, whenever public opinion and the views sanctioned by the approval of society come in contact with what they believe to be their duty. We may smile at their scruples about joining in the whirling dance, or sharing in our repasts, when they feel they are bound by the laws of fast and abstinence; but they heed us not. They are very strict in attending to daily prayer, and the devotions prescribed by their Church, and never fail, at appointed times, to go to what they call their 'religious duties,' no matter how broadly we may ridicule such starched observance. However we may alter our views according to the prevailing taste in

religious matters, they are always the same. If their belief is a superstition, it is a very determined and obstinate one. What do they mean? They are not playing a part; it would be absurd to imagine so for a moment. They are thoroughly in earnest, whatever this fancy is that beguiles them. They do not obtrude on our attention the observance and practices of their peculiar faith. They are not given to speak of their interior convictions. There is, at any rate, no cant or hypocrisy about them. What can it be that gives them this settled and determined conviction? While we amuse ourselves with watching, and sometimes imitating, the æsthetic religious fancies ‘of the period,’ they are as serious in their own settled way as if the glare of the gay world never for a moment disturbed their thoughts, or broke in upon their day-dreams of God and Heaven.

“But then they are so childish and silly in their worship, bowing down and striking their breasts at the ringing of a bell; closing their eyes in rapture, as the officiating priest, clad in outlandish garb, swings the censer with its perfumed smoke, before something that, in a gilded case, he has set up on high after many prostrations. The music is sometimes very fine, but more frequently it is harsh and discordant. The altar, where these mysterious rites are performed, is often a gem of cultivated taste, and looks charming, with its many lights and bright flowers; but occasionally it is hideous in its rude plainness, and tawdry decorations of tinsel and gold-paper, and such ornaments as children love to heap together in their doll-houses or baby-palaces. Whatever may be thought of their grand cathedrals, rich in exquisite carving and painted glass, with their lofty aisles and arches, built at so much cost, for no other purpose,



it would seem, than to gratify sensuous tastes, and shed a glamour of theatrical effect on sights and sounds and ceremonies strange and unmeaning—those wretched hovels and shapeless barns, where the same pompous ritual is feebly imitated fill us with loathing and disgust. How," they exclaim, "can reasonable people, fairly educated, find anything like satisfaction in the mumbling of prayers in Latin, and the nasal chanting of old priests, who seem, with much discomfort to themselves, to hurry through the wearying and monotonous service? And these never-ending repetitions of *Paters* and *Aves*, while the hands mechanically turn over the beads of a sort of necklace,—was ever anything so ridiculous? How could we ever think for a moment of becoming members of a Church that encourages such nonsensical practices?

"And then the strict obedience, and the humility, as they call it, but which we know is more like forgetfulness of self-respect, so much insisted on,—how could we possibly bear with such folly?

"And then confession of all our secret failings, which we would naturally hide from ourselves,—to have to tell a sinner like ourselves, all about our petty meannesses, and our insincerity, and our contemptible vanity, and our affectation, and our bitter jealousy, and hatred, and determination to mortify and cut to the bone those who have wounded our self-love, while we endeavor to deceive them with winning smiles and fond expressions of ardent friendship! Oh, the overwhelming shame of being obliged to disclose all these humiliating weaknesses of character, which we so carefully hide in society! Who could endure such a fearful ordeal? To have the most secret recesses of our hearts probed to the very bottom, dark things, known only to ourselves and the all-seeing



eye of God, foul imaginings, depraved longings after evil, wilfully entertained, and the like, and our most hidden sins! Ah, no: ‘better bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of’ or only dimly conjecture.

“Better bear our anxieties about necessary truth, and the one Faith essential for salvation, as best we can, and do our utmost to shut out our terrified inward sense of responsibility to God and our Saviour, by constant dissipation amid the frivolities sanctioned by the world around us, than ever become miserably deluded and superstitious Papists.”

I think I have not exaggerated by one iota, the great temptation of the “pride of life,” which binds, with its chains of adamant, so many generous and high-minded individuals who, in their anxiety about “the one thing necessary,” sometimes involuntarily turn their eyes towards the one true Church.

“No,” I fancy I hear them exclaim, “it is preferable to nerve ourselves, and look calmly on the awful future, than bear the utter renunciation of all that makes life dear and charming. And after all, *perhaps* it is not quite so dangerous as conscience tells us, to trifle with the Divine appointments: and who knows but we may find a plan whereby we can, at the same time, serve a merciful God, and gratify our own spirit of independence, and those tastes and inclinations which are essential to our happiness as human beings? Surely there must be some way by which we can safely put aside this humble ‘obedience to the Faith,’ and this ‘foolishness’ of Catholic teaching that excites our honest loathing and contempt.”

What shall I say to souls thus so sorely tried? Shall I attempt to argue with them, and point out how unreason-

able and unfounded are their prejudices against Catholic doctrine and Catholic practices and worship?

I know it would be a vain hope to cast in this way even one gleam of light on this dark sea of troubles. Of course in picturing to myself these severe temptations to proud human nature, which may all be summed up in the words "the pride of life," and the mental struggles of those who suffer under this most dangerous of all earthly temptations that war against the acquisition of Life eternal, I do not, for a moment, set before me a class of Christians who are altogether spoiled for serious thought by inordinate and constant frivolity. The case of such as these is, I fear, utterly hopeless. An angel from Heaven might perhaps, by a smart brush of his wing, or the vivid suggestion of an eternity of misery, startle them from their fascination; but the plain and homely words of a minister of the Gospel—"the foolishness of our preaching," if it is heeded at all, can only divert such as these.

The worldly-minded Christians whom I am venturing, not without great misgivings of the weakness of my words, to address, are thus admirably described by the great Cardinal, who knows better than any living man, how to reach the heart of beings gifted with high intelligence and strength of character.

"We find these men," says Cardinal Newman, and of course women too are included under the generic name, "possessed of many virtues, but proud, bashful, fastidious, and reserved. Why is this? It is because they think and act as if there were really nothing objective in their religion; it is because conscience to them is not the word of a law-giver, as it ought to be, but the dictate of their own minds and nothing more; it is because they do

not look out of themselves, because they do not look through and beyond their own minds to their Maker, but are engrossed in notions of what is due to themselves, to their own dignity, and their own consistency. Their conscience has become a mere self-respect. Instead of doing one thing and then another, as each is called for in faith and obedience, careless of what may be called the *keeping* of deed with deed, and leaving Him who gives the command to blend the portions of their conduct into a whole, their one object, however unconscious to themselves, is to paint a smooth and perfect surface, and to be able to say to themselves that they have done their duty. When they do wrong, they feel, not contrition, of which God is the object, but remorse and a sense of degradation. They call themselves fools, not sinners; they are angry and impatient, not humble. They shut themselves up in themselves; it is misery to them to think or to speak of their own feelings; it is misery to suppose that others see them, and their shyness and sensitiveness often become morbid. As to confession, which is so natural to the Catholic, to them it is impossible; unless indeed in cases where they have been guilty, an apology is due to their own character, is expected of them, and will be satisfactory to look back upon. They are victims of an intense self-contemplation.” (“Idea of a University,” page 191.)

No wonder that such as these regard Catholic practices and worship as I have described above. They do not endeavor to find out the manner in which it pleases God that He would be worshipped and honored by His creatures. They have their own views of the propriety or fitness of a becoming form of service. If they had their own way, they would prescribe to the clergyman the

style of reading that suited them, the very tone and varied modulations which vibrated soothingly or agreeably with chords in their own interior consciousness.

Like the celebrated American preacher, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, they would gush in admiration of the deep-toned Amen, which, it appears, forms in his æsthetic view, the main charm of the Anglican service, provided it evoked a thrill within them in unison with the prolonged cadence of this beautiful termination of the chanted prayer. This is "the correct thing," provided always it is sustained by a ritual in harmony with their perceptions of the most becoming form of Church service. Why should they trouble themselves as to what suited the wants of the poor and the uneducated and simple, any more than as to what form of public worship was in use in primitive times, and sanctioned by the practice of Apostolic men instructed in this important matter by the Apostles themselves? Their "set" have decided that this old-fashioned Catholic Ritual is puerile and silly, and fit only for children. But these strong-minded characters won't accept even the suggestions of their friends on the point, unless it perfectly falls in with their own judgment, and is absolutely free from what they consider out of taste or jarring with their sensibilities.

This can hardly be called a large-minded view of the fitness of things; and perhaps the sketch given by the Cardinal may help those who know scarcely anything of the object of Catholic worship, to see that it looks very like subjective conceit of the very narrowest character, to make up their minds, that they could never bear the idea of joining in a worship which seems to them, without knowing much about it, so ridiculous and contemptible.

I alluded more particularly to one form of our worship, when I was pointing out the object of these high-handed decisions of private judgment. How few Protestants understand what is meant by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament!

Once this is properly understood, how poor and wretched and contemptible are the objections to the mode in which the Ritual of the Church is carried out! It is not the grandeur of the church, or the pealing organ, or the lights and flowers, that form the attraction which draws Catholics to assist at this most sacred rite, and makes their hearts overflow with lively sentiments of peace and holy joy.

It is because the Incarnate Saviour is present, and because the visible sign of the Son of Man is seated upon His throne in the midst of His people. It is because the Emmanuel gives all who are present His solemn benediction. It is because the eye of Faith beholds Him, as when He lifted up His hands over the children, or when He blessed His chosen ones upon Mount Olivet. Again, to use the words of Cardinal Newman, “It is a full accomplishment of what the priest invoked upon the Israelites: ‘The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord show His face to thee, and have mercy on thee; the Lord turn His countenance to thee, and give thee peace.’ Can there be a more touching rite, even in the judgment of those who do not believe in it? How many a man, not a Catholic, is moved on seeing it to say, ‘Oh, that I did but believe it!’ when he sees the priest take up the Fount of Mercy, and the people bent low in adoration! It is one of the most beautiful, natural, and soothing actions of the Church.” (“Present Position of Catholics,” p. 255.)



How weak and silly seem these objections of the "pride of life" when confronted with the simple majesty of truth! The grand church and its magnificent decorations, are after all only mere accessories to raise the soul above the things of earth, and help it to realize the immensity of the Divine condescension. The same rite performed, in all its essential points, at the humblest altar in the world, even in the Kaffir hut, where I have at times offered up the Most Holy Sacrifice, tells the tale of love in another way that speaks as eloquently to simple Faith.

In the midst of absolute desolation, as regards fitting ornaments and ceremonial, the pious soul is helped to picture to itself the stable and the crib, and in company with Mary and Joseph, and the humble shepherds, to bow down and adore.

The grand church and the music and the many lights and garlands of flowers mark our gratitude for God's greatest gift to man; and the humble grot, or the wretched hovel, or the shapeless barn, appeal in their rude simplicity, to souls enabled by Faith to realize to themselves the wonderful condescension of Almighty love.

What becomes in this view of the "doll-house and the frippery of tinsel and childish adornment," so haughtily urged against Catholic worship? Verily, I believe that souls capable of appreciating anything really great and sublime in this world must feel to the quick, the touching words of the Saviour, once addressed by Him to supercilious criticism of this kind,—“Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise” (Matt. xxi. 16),—and hang their heads in shame and confusion.

I mentioned Confession as another of the bugbears that



affright the tender susceptibilities of the “pride of life.” Hear what the Cardinal, whose words I love to quote, says upon the subject:

“How many souls in distress, anxiety, or loneliness, whose one need is to find a being to whom they can pour out their feelings unheard by the world? Tell them out they must; they cannot tell them out to those whom they see every hour. They want to tell them, and not to tell them; and they want to tell them out, yet be as if they be not told; they wish to tell them to one who is strong enough to bear them, yet not too strong to despise them; they wish to tell them to one who can at once advise and can sympathize with them; they wish to relieve themselves of a load, to gain a solace, to receive the assurance that there is one who thinks of them, and one to whom in thought they can recur, to whom they can betake themselves, if necessary, from time to time, while they are in the world. How many a Protestant’s heart would leap at the news of such a benefit, putting aside all distinct ideas of a sacramental ordinance, or of a grant of pardon, and the conveyance of grace! If there is a heavenly idea in the Catholic Church, looking at it simply as an idea, surely, next after the Blessed Sacrament, Confession is such. Oh, what a soothing charm is there, which the world can neither give nor take away! Oh, what a piercing, heart-subduing tranquillity, provoking tears of joy, is poured almost substantially and physically upon the soul, the oil of gladness, as Scripture calls it, when the penitent at length rises, his God reconciled to him, his sins rolled away forever! This is confession as it is in fact.” (“Present Position of Catholics,” p. 351.)

I would say a few words about that devotion of the Rosary, or the “Beads,” which to Protestants seems one

of the most extraordinary and extravagantly stupid devotions in use in the Catholic Church. It is only they who know nothing whatever about it that form this low estimate of its true character. They generally regard it as a pious jargon, practised only by the most ignorant Catholics—something on a par with the windmill prayers of the low Chinese. Perhaps it is not generally known that the lower orders of the interior of the "Flowery Land" attach slips of paper containing the words of a prayer to the arms of a toy windmill, which, by turning a handle, are made to revolve with great rapidity. This fanciful idea of the Chinese, which is improved upon by the plan of a shrewd Yankee, seems almost too ridiculous to be mentioned here, or the improvement either. But such things serve to bring out the truth by contrast. It is said that the Yankee, having heard that the Lord's Prayer was the most admirable that could be conceived, thought how it might be most easily adapted to his use. He had a copy of the prayer attached to his bed-head, and pointing to it morning and at night, said, "Lord, these are my sentiments." Almost as ludicrous are the notions of the Beads formed by most of our separated brethren. Probably the intelligent Protestant, who has directed his attention to this devotion, and has heard it and seen it practised, considers that the faster the *Paters* and *Aves* are recited, the greater is the efficacy attached by superstitious Papists to the performance.

But the fact is that this form of prayer is the most generally practised by Catholics of high and low degree. The greatest dignitaries in the Catholic Church make a practice of saying the Rosary on the beads every day. It is the ordinary devotion of spare time, and the one which, after the light is extinguished at bedtime, soothes the soul

to tranquil rest. It embodies in itself the most perfect forms of mental and vocal prayer, bringing vividly before the mind the chief mysteries in the life and passion and glory of our Divine Saviour, and of His blessed mother, while the lips are engaged in repeating the prayer which our Divine Lord taught us, and saluting with the angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth the Holy Virgin, in connection with the great mystery of the Incarnation. Protestants who became Catholics have assured me that, though they constantly read a chapter in the New Testament, from their earliest capacity to read, they never so realized to themselves the infinite goodness of our Divine Saviour as when they had learned to repeat the Rosary. The mind is fixed on some striking event in the life of our Lord on earth, or on the glorious mysteries of His Resurrection and Ascension, and the joyful meeting of the Blessed Mother and Son in Heaven, till they seem in company of the Holy Family, seeing with the eyes of Mary and Joseph the realities of these mysteries, surrounded by the angels, to repeat with them their acts of praise and thanksgiving for all God's gracious mercies. As Cardinal Wiseman so beautifully expresses it, “Many a poor beadsman or woman, who never received the most rudimentary education, will stand higher in Heaven and nearer to the throne of God, than the most learned Christian scholars, by the habit of pious meditation acquired in this simple devotion.”

I remember well, in college, the surprise and admiration excited in one of the Honorable Visitors, whose attention was attracted by an immense pile of rosaries, left by the students near the altar of the college chapel, to be blessed. He asked for what purpose they were meant, and the senior Dean who accompanied the distinguished

visitor, briefly told him how the anchorets in the desert, in early Christian times, who had no books, or perhaps could not read the Divine Office, including the psalter with its one hundred and fifty psalms, contrived, by means of berries or little stones strung on a cord, to repeat with the regularity of the priests and ecclesiastics the prayers which they knew by heart, according so many *paters* and *aves* to every psalm, while their minds were fixed on the most striking events in the history of the Redeemer. He further explained how this devotion was modelled into its present form by St. Dominic, that it naturally became the prayer of the simple and the unlearned, and that the blessings bestowed on them gradually attracted the attention of their more learned brethren, and caused it to be adopted by all good Catholics. The gentleman who asked for the information was a Protestant, who never before had seen a Beads, or "the thing like a necklace;" yet he could scarcely find words to express his respect and reverence for the ingenious means devised by Catholic instincts, and approved of by the Church, to enable the humblest of her children to join with the most gifted in praising and honoring God.

Those Catholics who sometimes have the privilege of saying the Rosary with the pious nuns, and the children who attend their schools, know well how irresistibly they are borne upwards to the mercy-seat, by the incessant peals of praise and adoration, which burst forth around them during the recitation of the Rosary in the convent chapel.

These are some of the practices which evoke the scorn and contempt of Protestants, even of those who consider themselves most liberal in their views of Catholicity, and who are frightened from becoming members of the one

true Fold, by what they so rashly call these evidences of rank superstition and revolting childishness. God help them! They know not what they say. It would be something more akin to reasonable liberality if, like the visitor of the college, who was a distinguished chief-justice of Her Majesty's courts in Ireland, they sought instruction before they attempted to pass judgment.

I commenced this chapter with an extract from *Fabiola*. The glances at well-remembered passages in that exquisitely beautiful story which I caught as I searched for the passage I required, have so filled my mind, and they seem so connected with my subject, that I will close it with a few which appear to me the most charming of all.

The Pagan lady, who had devoted her splendid abilities to the study of everything beautiful in Pagan philosophy, is learning Christianity from the lips of her slave Syra. What a lesson for proud private judgment and subjective views of the Gospel is furnished in the picture so admirably drawn by the polished scholar, Cardinal Wiseman!

I scarcely know what gems to select from the profusion set before me. But this one bearing on the Incarnation seems to me most deserving of the consideration of the class to which this chapter is specially directed.

Syra had been explaining the principal mysteries of Catholic teaching, during which “Philosophy had given place to Religion, captiousness to docility, incredulity to Faith.”

But now a sadness seemed to have come over *Fabiola*'s heart. Syra read it in her looks, and asked her its cause.

“I hardly dare tell you,” she replied; “but all that you have related to me is so beautiful, so divine, that it seems to me necessarily to end here. ‘The Word’ (what a noble name!), that is the expression of God's love, the



exteration of His wisdom, the evidence of His power, the very breath of His life-giving life, which is Himself, becometh flesh. Who shall furnish it to Him? Shall He take up the cast-up slough of a tainted humanity, or shall a new manhood be created for *Him*? Shall He take His place in a double genealogy, receiving thus into Himself a twofold tide of corruption; and shall there be any one on earth daring and high enough to call himself His Father?"

"No," softly whispered Syra; "but there shall be one holy enough and humble enough to be worthy to call herself His mother!"

"And who was *she*?" asked Fabiola with great reverence.

"One whose very name is blessed by every one that truly loves her Son. Mary is the name by which you will know her. Well, you may suppose, was she prepared for such high destiny by holiness and virtue: not as cleansed, but as ever clean; not as purified, but as always pure; not freed, but exempted from sin. The tide of which you spoke found before her the dam of an eternal decree, which could not brook that the holiness of God should mingle what it could only redeem by keeping extraneous to itself."

There is something here which might be seriously considered with profit by those who, without any fixed Rule of Faith on the mystery of the Incarnation, presumed to dictate to the Church of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, the limits of her teaching on this fundamental mystery of Christian truth.

When I hear or read the stupid things which are said or written about the Immaculate Conception, and mark the complete misunderstanding of the doctrine, and the

charge brought against the Church of corrupting the “Faith once delivered to the saints,” or of teaching new doctrine opposed to its primary principles, I cannot help thinking how much more wise it would be for our dogmatic critics to study at least the Catechism, or some book of rudimentary instruction on Catholic belief, before they attempted to pose as learned professors in theology.

I read in a colonial newspaper a few weeks ago, at the close of a friendly review of the introduction to “Catholic Christianity and Modern Unbelief,” the extraordinary observation, that if the Catholic Church went on adding new and strange dogmas to its creed, it would end in completely subverting the original Deposit of revealed truth.

Of course the editor never heard of Development, or he could not have been betrayed into so palpable a blunder. The same senseless remark might have been made by an Arian heretic when the Council of Nice developed the truth of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Church was not founded by Jesus Christ, merely to record the truths contained in the Apostles’ Creed, but according to the wants of the faithful, disturbed by the assaults of daring heresy, to explain and define them. When it is shown that a new definition, or a more ample unfolding of the truth committed to her charge, has contradicted or denied a dogma accepted as Revelation from the beginning, it will be time to raise a question of this kind.

In every age of the existence of the Church, heresy or obstinate error has required not only its condemnation by the lips of inspired and infallible truth, but such an exposition of the dogma controverted, or attempted to be corrupted, as would make it plain and unmistakable to the

meanest capacity of all who, in accordance with the appointment of Christ, looked up to the Church for guidance and instruction.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as explained in the passage from *Fabiola*, is only a clearer and more distinct declaration of the fact that the All-Holy Word, the only Son of God, "was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us."

There is another passage from this charming book, with which I will conclude this chapter. It is so suggestive of the grand plan of Redemption as seen by Faith, and of the means whereby the atonement is brought within our individual reach, that I can find no better introduction to the subject of the next chapter, which will be devoted to vindicate the cardinal virtue, which is "the root of Justification," the ground of our hope, and the source of all Christian love.

*Fabiola* says to her servant, "Dare any one address by worship, this Being whom you have described to me? Is He not too great, too lofty, too distant for this?"

"Oh no; far from it, noble lady," answered Syra. "He is not distant from any of us; for as much as the light of the sun, so in the very splendor of His might, His kindness, and His wisdom, we live and move and have our being. Hence one may address Him, not as far off, but as around us and within us, while we are in Him; and He hears us not with ears, but our words drop at once into His very bosom, and the desires of our hearts pass directly into the Divine abyss of His."

"But," pursued *Fabiola*, somewhat timidly, "is there no great act of acknowledgment, such as sacrifice is supposed to be, whereby He may be formally recognized and adored?"

And when Syra had replied that there was such a rite, and explained that the Victim should be worthy of the Deity, that it should be spotless in purity, matchless in greatness, unbounded in acceptableness, she announced to the awed and amazed pagan lady, trembling with the first inspirations of revealed truth, “THAT VICTIM IS HIMSELF” we behold in the mystery involved in these words that consummation of Divine wisdom, almighty power, and infinite love which raises every ceremony in the worship of the Catholic Church as high above the crude speculations of private judgment, and rude and ignorant human criticism, as Heaven is above this lowly earth.

## CHAPTER VII.

## Faith.

IN Grahamstown, many years ago, there was a wild fellow, who, whenever he was in his cups, loved "to argue controversy," as he called it, and who was seldom or never posed for an answer, when hard pressed by an opponent. On one occasion he was maintaining against all-comers in the tap-room, that he, an Irishman and a Catholic, held the one true faith; and when it was put to him that other God-fearing Christians who worshipped according to the lights of their individual conscience might have a certain share in the cardinal virtue, he felt called upon to settle the argument with a home thrust.

"Have you then Faith?" said he to his Wesleyan antagonist.

"Yes," meekly replied the other, "I feel that I have abundant and life-giving faith."

"Can you move mountains? Do that, and I will believe you."

No doubt Pat congratulated himself on his victory, and enjoyed a triumph in the approving laughter of his friends. Absurd as this style of reasoning is, and extravagant as is the notion of Faith which flashed on the mother-wit of my excited countryman, I have met with views of Faith amongst non-Catholics quite on a par with this.

When feeling and sentiment are the only guide, it would be difficult to fix any limit to the wild fancies of



the imagination, as it speculates about Faith. In the chapter on the Vagaries of Private Judgment there are many illustrations of my meaning. Now that I purpose to lay before my readers what is meant by reasonable Faith, as understood and explained by the Catholic Church, it will not be expected that I should dwell even momentarily on mere distortions of this Divine virtue.

The simplest notion that I can give of Faith, as we Catholics comprehend it, is that it means unbounded trust and undoubting confidence in the Divine teaching. We honor God by believing firmly everything He tells us by the voice of His living and speaking Church.

When Christians who are not Catholics sneer at our credulity, and say that we are ready to believe anything, no matter how incredible, they are only characterizing our Faith by its most notable and essential qualities. Certainly a well-instructed and devout Catholic will believe with all his heart and soul whatever God is pleased to tell him about His Divine nature or about the mysteries of Religion. He knows intuitively that he cannot take into his finite mind the Infinite; that there must of necessity be extraordinary and incomprehensible things in all that concerns the great God and His relations with created beings; and because he is certain that God cannot deceive him, and because he hopes that a day will come when he shall see God face to face, and in that beatific vision find his happiness for evermore, he enjoys, even here below, a positive delight in manifesting this unbounded confidence in God's word. He is certain, too, that, in proportion to his unhesitating belief, he is honoring and pleasing God.

In fact there cannot be imagined a nobler offering, or one more worthy of a child of God, than that which is

presented to our Heavenly Father by an act of entire and unbounded Faith.

As in His communications to us, through the inspired prophets and sacred writers, God is pleased to draw us towards Himself by language suited to our capacities of feeling; as He speaks of His love for us being like that of a mother for her child, and tells us that He requires our hearts, and is jealous of our love, we may be allowed to picture to ourselves "the joy of the Lord," as, looking up to Him revealed to us in the person of His Son, we say, with all the ardor of our being, "We believe, O Lord! Help our unbelief." "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

There can be no purer pleasure in this world than that enjoyed by a good father, who, gazing on the upturned and reverent face of the child he loves, hears the first questions of budding reason, and marks the rapt attention with which his lessons are received. And as this father is honored by the implicit trust and the unwavering confidence with which his every word is received by the child nestling in his bosom, as he feels in this touching homage a delight beyond any other joy this world can give, may not we, "taught," as we are, "of God," believe that by the homage of our Faith, we are rendering ourselves "fit for the kingdom of heaven"?

Such is the simplest idea I can give of Faith; and Faith like this is evidently impossible outside the Catholic Church. If we cannot know with certainty what God has taught, if there is no living Voice to tell us infallibly His blessed will, how is Faith like this possible?

If the words of life must first be humanized, adapted by human formularies to our view of things, stripped by human discernment and human wisdom of their heavenly

and mysterious import, carefully weighed in the balance of reason, and passed through the crucible of private judgment, before we venture to receive them, surely it does not require any lengthened proof to show that, in this way, it is impossible to honor God by perfect Faith.

We may indeed, by this course, honor our own pride and humor our sensibilities; but there is an icy barrier between us and our Father that chills anything like that tender intercourse, the sweet vision of which is vouchsafed to us in the inspired Scriptures.

I do not in the least mean to deny, that there may be a sort of reverent and trusting Faith in Christians who are not members of the one fold. Even by the light of natural reason, men may believe in the existence of God and His perfections, and the immortality of the soul, and their own moral responsibility. Nay, more: they may positively reject Catholic doctrine as a whole, and yet believe in certain dogmas with real Faith; because, as the most eminent Catholic theologians teach, the infallible authority of the Church does not necessarily enter into the essence of an act of Faith. There are other motives of credibility, besides the indwelling of the spirit of truth, in the Church, that can satisfy thoughtful men of the fact of a Divine Revelation.

The history of Christianity will, in itself, beget this confidence. But a belief which has no higher ground of certainty than the testimony of history sifted and tried by critical analysis, is but a poor and timid and shrinking Faith, which, when it is tested, soon resolves itself into Rationalism. It will hardly, in its acceptance of revealed truth, wary and cautious and suspicious as it must be, develop that childlike trust which is the special privilege of Catholic Faith.

It is not that the non-Catholic Christian would not believe anything which he considers the God of truth announces to him; but the real fact is, that without an infallible, living, and speaking guide to assure him that God has spoken, and to explain to him the meaning of the Divine message, he is cut off from this charming intercourse with God which constitutes the real happiness of a good Christian.

I would not, without grave necessity, say one word that might agitate and ruffle that feeble spark of Faith, which is so carefully sheltered and protected by pious sentiment, as to afford some comfort and security and peace to the weary spirit, tired of the world and of its vanities, and longing to be at rest in the bosom of God.

But the days in which we live are stormy and tempestuous in all that regards religion; and a sudden blast of impiety coming from a point where it is least expected, or perhaps the insidious whisper of a trusted friend, may pierce at any moment the weak barrier wherein weak, timid Faith lies hid, and extinguish it forever.

A young man told me, not long ago, that in the course of a conversation with an old friend of the family,—one of much worldly learning and experience, whom he had been taught in childhood to look up to with reverence,—he happened to point out the manifest contradiction between some new geological theory and the inspired words of Genesis. “What!” suddenly exclaimed his venerable friend,—who, by the way, had been once a Bible Christian of remarkable earnestness,—“and is it possible that you, after a good education and a fair knowledge of the world, can believe in that antiquated rubbish?”

I was not surprised that so rude a blast had seriously imperilled even Catholic Faith, tried as it then was by

the temptations of youth, and the charms of a sensuous world.

No; I firmly believe that the evil days are at hand when, outside the Catholic Church, there will exist no longer a vigorous and healthy, even fragmentary Christian Faith, which might shut out these pestiferous blasts of proud and angry unbelief. The time is almost come when a sickly emotional piety, ever craving with unhealthy appetite some brief satisfaction in high-wrought feeling, or the stimulants of new forms of religious worship, or sleeping in a fancied security and peace, will render rash and inconsiderate youth exposed to that fatal lethargy which will be broken only by the dread summons to Judgment.

Hence I believe, with all my soul, that it is a matter of the utmost importance for all Christians "to prove themselves," and satisfy their consciences on the grounds of the Faith that is in them.

Rationalism and free-thought do not mince matters. They who regard reason, unaided by any light from Heaven, as the *ultima ratio*, which is bound to test all theories and beliefs, will not be slow in rudely blighting the religious opinions of their friends. And if there is no logical basis for Faith, even the most ardent and glowing belief will be robbed of its vitality and completely extinguished by the cold blasts of sneering unbelief. Now that reverence for the written Word of God is suffering from the natural consequences of the promiscuous scattering of the sacred book in millions of copies, and that the whole New Testament may be purchased for a few pence,—as well by the profane as by those who have been trained to regard it with a sort of superstitious reverence,—it is beyond the power of simple emotional piety



to meet the subtle questions of vulgar scepticism, or to explain the nature and extent of that inspiration which causes the Bible to be so dearly prized by all earnest Christians.

Time was, and not so long ago, when the taint of criticising unbelief had not reached the Methodist body ; but hear what the *Sun* of New York, a non-Catholic newspaper, quoted in the *Tablet* of June 21, 1884, says with regard to those earnest believers :

“Religious scepticism is also appearing among the Methodists, and weakening the force of the body which of old knew only religious faith and zeal. Dr. Curry, their chief scholar, confesses that he has come to the conclusion that many of the Bible stories are only old woman’s tales ; and that the ancient veneration for the Scriptures, as the Word of God, must slowly disappear.”

Either there is some sustaining principle in non-Catholic belief, or there is not ; and I mean by a sustaining principle, one that will stand the test of constant assault, one that does not consist in mere pious verbiage, one that has, in its core, at least something that ordinary intelligence can grasp and hold. If there is no such real basis for belief, then the sooner good and piously disposed people are told the truth the better,—that their faith is mere human opinion, and nothing more.

If it is still maintained that private judgment, enlightened by the spirit of truth, is the safe and unerring foundation for individual faith, then let it be clearly shown, how such a position is reconcilable with the perpetual vagaries of this private judgment.

There is not one of the 183 jarring sects which rest on this principle, in the United Kingdom, that cannot point to its honest votaries, who sturdily profess to hold to

their religious convictions. They manifestly cannot *all* be led by the one spirit of truth.

Ingenious sophists have undertaken to prove that black is white, and white is black; and though their subtle reasoning might confuse for a moment a man of solid sense, every one knows that such pretended logic is absurd on the very face of it.

Is it less absurd to maintain that the one, undivided and indivisible truth can be the origin of beliefs as different from each other as white is from black? There is then no fixed principle in non-Catholic belief that can be relied on; and all attempts at inventing one, must, from the very nature of the case, give way before the reckless assaults of blatant and irrepressible infidelity.

If men will persist in claiming for themselves the right of private judgment, they cannot possibly have a sound principle to fall back upon, when they are driven from the position of feeble sentimentalism by the persistent assaults of vulgar unbelief.

A Bradlaugh or an Ingersoll, or any one of the crew whose bold assertions cause men to shudder who retain one atom of reverent Faith, must carry all before him. And the reason is plain and obvious to the meanest capacity. Rationalism is the ultimate judge of the controversy on both sides. The only difference is that one party, the Free-thinkers, boldly and openly maintain the indisputable rights of this supreme judge, while the other shelters its pretensions to Divine light under the cover of human formularies and the shadow of great names.

But the "*magni nominis umbra*," the shadow of a venerated name, is soon dissipated by the untuned and fierce blaze of the light which has called it into existence.

There is no attempt to invoke a Divine authority ; such an attempt would recoil on the heads of those who would rashly venture to make it. If it is found by sad experience, and the incessant conflict of opinion, that such an authority is essential to the maintenance of revealed truth, then it is obvious that some clearly defined plan must have been laid down by Him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life;” and this being so, how fearful is the responsibility of those who, under pretence of reforming the plan of the Divine Founder of Christianity, attempted, behemoth-like, “to upheave its vastness”!

This argument scarcely requires an illustration or further enlargement. But to make the matter clearer, I borrow one from the work of Cardinal Manning—“England and Christendom”:

“The commission of the Catholic Church is to make disciples of all nations. A disciple recognizes and submits to his teacher. The disciple who argues with his teacher is a judge, not a learner. To treat with the Church of God is to deny its Divine authority; but its Divine authority is a primary article of Revelation, and runs through every article of Faith. If a man believe the whole Faith, and yet offend in this one point, he is incapable of admission to the unity of the Church. He who denies one article of Faith, even the least and remotest from the higher, denies the Divine authority of all articles of Faith. Even if he do this through invincible ignorance, he is in material heresy. If he do it knowingly and deliberately, he is in formal heresy. For instance, to deny the eternity of punishment is also to deny, as an article of Faith, the eternity of bliss; for both rest on the same Revelation, and are delivered by the same Divine Voice. Such a denial rejects the Divine

authority, by refusing to believe its word ; and he who does so in this, has no warrant to rest in that Divine authority, even in the articles of Faith which he may still believe. He cannot submit to it in one thing, and resist it in another, without resisting it as such. If he will not believe the eternity of punishment, even upon Divine authority, it is evident that it is upon his own opinion of intrinsic credibility, and not upon Divine authority, that he believes the eternity of bliss."

The Cardinal, in this passage, is arguing against those who affected to treat with the Church of God about conditions of union. They felt the misery of their position ; they saw clearly that every step they made in the direction of private judgment was an abyss invoking another abyss, deeper and more desolating than the first ; and so they wished to treat with the Catholic Church, and to dictate to the Spouse of Christ the conditions which they hoped would save them from confessing the shame of their great error. But it could not be. "The highest spiritual authority on earth was compelled to check all hope of union between the Anglican and the Catholic Church, founded on mutual concessions, reciprocal interpretations, much more on compromises, or concordats."

The argument applies with peculiar force to those who hate the Catholic Church, and have no thought of compromising with her the claims of private judgment. They see clearly that their last appeal is reason, that there can be no question of resuscitating that Divine authority, against which they impiously rebelled. And they feel that, when matters are submitted to reason, there is then question, as Dr. Osborne expresses it, "not between human opinion and the written Word of God, but between human opinion and human formularies," between the

judgments of one set of men and another, without the most remote possibility of appeal to any judge who, even with the semblance of Divine authority, might attempt to settle these scandalous dissensions.

Why should rationalists of the Bradlaugh school submit to others who, half-clinging to the fragmentary traditions of "the Faith once delivered to the saints," lack the boldness of their adversaries, and feebly endeavor to concoct new schemes of salvation that may amuse and delude for a time their unthinking followers?

In the Catholic Church, the principle is as clear as the noonday sun. The truth of God is the ground of Divine Faith, and we know the truth revealed by God, not the letter only, but its fixed and determined meaning, through the voice of the Church, which its Divine Founder commands us to hear.

How the Church addresses us will be seen farther on, as I treat of the infallibility.

There is only one argument against this plain and simple principle of Divine authority, and though I have treated of it before, yet because it is the popular argument, and is always dwelt upon by the adversaries of the Catholic Church, I must again notice it.

To hear the Church, to obey the Church, to bow down with unquestioning assent to the decisions of the Church, is, it is argued, unmanly and slavish submission. If the Church were not vested with Divine authority, I would say—Yes. If God our Saviour did not command us to hear the teaching body whom He commissioned to preach to all nations and to every creature, I should say decidedly—Yes: it would be most slavish to hear and obey her voice. But it is not slavish to hear and obey the voice of God, and to do what God clearly and distinctly orders us to do.



As long as these words of the eternal Gospel remain, which Christ addressed to the first appointed teachers of His Word,—“He that heareth you heareth Me. He that despiseth you despiseth Me,”—there can be no plea founded on human pride or human will that can prevail against them.

If when the great God announced His law amidst the thunders and lightning on Sinai, one amongst the awed and prostrate multitude had stood up, and, with Satanic pride, had said aloud, “*Non serviam*,”—“I will not obey,”—we know well, from the stern rule maintained over the Jewish people, how immediate and how terrible would have been the punishment of this daring act of rebellion.

The offence is not less, it is more inexcusable, when the Son of God Himself gives us the example of obedience unto death, and putting aside all the terrors of Almighty majesty, begs us for His sake, and as we value our eternal salvation, to “learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart,” and with the docility of little children, to “hear His word and keep it.”

If Christ had not promised the teachers of His law to be always with them in the exercise of their office, and so to guide their words by the Spirit of truth, that while they seemed to speak as weak men, it was in reality this Divine Spirit that would speak through their lips,—“For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you” (Matt. x. 20),—there might be some excuse in questioning their teaching.

If it could be imagined that the duly appointed teachers could deceive us, then it would be not only a hardship but a degradation of all that is noble in man, that we should be obliged to receive as infallible truth, what might be absolutely false.

But our Divine Lord, by conferring on them, in this office of teaching His word, security from error, has conferred on us a privilege and a liberty from the possibility of deception, such as the pagan world never dreamt of before His time. By that promise to be always with them, and to guide them always in teaching the truth, He has made us free from the misery of being crushed under the weight of error, that enslaved and bound to earth a pagan world; and is now, in these evil days, thrusting back mankind, which He redeemed with His precious blood, into a worse than pagan confusion of hopeless dreams and worthless speculations.

But it will be said, "Have we not a right to use our reason and exercise our common-sense in considering the dogmas that are proposed for our belief? Nay, is it not our duty, as reasonable beings, to weigh them well and see that in all things they square with our experience, before we give them our assent, and profess to believe them?"

I answer,—Most decidedly we have *no* such right, nor can there be such a duty imagined to exist, once we receive these dogmas on Divine authority. If God, by the means instituted by His Divine Son, condescends to tell us as much as He considers we are fit to bear, about Himself, and the relations He has mercifully appointed between Himself and us, we should at once, and without the least hesitation, yea, rather with the most entire satisfaction and becoming gratitude, believe firmly everything so revealed.

This is to honor God by Faith, to show unbounded filial confidence in His teaching; and the honor and the confidence are all the more becoming on our part, when the dogmas so proposed transcend every effort of the hu-

man mind to comprehend them. This is to believe like Abraham, "who against hope believed in hope,—and he was not weak in Faith,—in the promise also of God, he staggered not by distrust: but was strengthened in Faith, giving glory to God. Most fully knowing that whatsoever He had promised, He is able also to perform. And therefore it was reputed to him unto justice" (Rom. iv. 18, 19, et seq.).

When we consider the objects of Faith, that its mysteries regard Divine things of the nature of which we can, by our unaided knowledge and experience, understand nothing; that, after they have been revealed, they are mysteries still; and that, in view of them, we can only fittingly exclaim with the Apostle, "*O Altitudo!*" "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!"—all vain imaginings must cease.

If we could by any stretch of intellectual power grasp the immensity of the truths proposed to us, see and determine their fitness, and approve of their wisdom by our judgment, in what sense would this approval of our puny reason honor the All-wise and the Omnipotent?

It would, on the contrary, offer an insult to His Infinite Majesty, by attempting to drag Him down from His high throne above to the lowly level of earth.

"But what is the use of believing, or professing to believe, things which we do not comprehend? Is it not a mere pretence of believing? And must not the most lively demonstrations of Faith in such inconceivable things appear a hideous mockery in His sight, Who sees how utterly hollow and worthless and unmeaning are these expressions of blind belief?" Ah, no! Does the

loving father read mockery and distrust in the wondering eyes of his little child as he vainly tries to satisfy its opening curiosity with words that can have no meaning to its unpractised ear? And will he not press the child more fondly to his bosom as he notes its feeble efforts to lisp the strange sounds, that thus it may win yet another caress from the being who, with the mother, is all the world to its young mind, the focus and centre of its almost adoring love?

It is these mysteries, proposed to Faith by Divine authority, and accepted purely and simply because they emanate from lips that never can deceive us, that lift the true believer above the shadows and mists and clouds of this earthly life, and enable him to breathe the air of Heaven, the life-giving and sustaining power of the soul while it is confined in its prison-house of clay. These truths are the food of Faith—"The substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things that appear not" (Heb. xi. 1).

In the next chapter I mean to show that Hope which springs from Faith, no more than Faith itself, can be derived from the speculations and opinions of private judgment.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## Hope.

WHO is not familiar with the old legend of Pandora, in which the poetic imagination of classic days has involved the primeval revelation of the fall of man and the promise of a Redeemer? Curiosity tempts "the all-gifted," and the fatal box is opened, which is filled with the miseries of sin. Hope alone remains to be the comfort of a fallen race. However men may try to forget the history of the sin of disobedience, as given by the inspired writer, and amuse themselves in speculating on the origin of evil, they all admit, and have in every age admitted, that Hope is the stay and comfort of humanity.

We trace it even amidst the horrors of the worst forms of paganism. The sacrifices of human victims were inspired by Hope. There was an undying instinct in man, however fallen and degraded, as long as he did not abandon himself utterly to brutal passions, that something would save him from the fatal consequences of his transgressions against the laws of nature and conscience; and under the irrepressible craving of Hope he freely gave up to destruction whatever was most dear and precious in his sight.

It was only the proud philosophers who, through the blindness of their hearts, "having the understanding obscured with darkness," and alienated from the life of God, sunk below the level of human nature in its weak-



est forms. Their deplorable perversion was owing to the loss of hope. They had so wearied their minds with vain speculations and endless discussions, that they despaired of even a gleam of light to conduct them to a better life; and so, as the Apostle tells us, they sunk to the lowest depths of unnatural depravity—"Who despairing, have given themselves up to lasciviousness, to the working all uncleanness unto covetousness" (Ephes. iv. 19).

There is not, most probably, any fear that the philosophers of the present day will abandon themselves to the excesses indicated by the Apostle. Christianity has so leavened society, that, though men should do their worst against the teaching of our Divine Lord, they cannot purge out that leaven, which, to the consummation of the world, will retain its power of stirring up human thought and feeling into a mighty ferment against the exhibition and public display of pagan enormities. Such things may indeed infest the secret dens of infamy, where men have been taught by this pseudo-philosophy to ignore a Personal God, and to mock the reproaches of conscience and the terrors of religion. But the high places of the world can know no more these abominations.

If, however, the masses ever bid defiance to "the powers that be," it will, I fear, be seen too clearly what is meant by society without God. When public writers of considerable literary attainments and exalted position proclaim, in cheap pamphlets, that our leaders of progress surpass our Divine Lord in wisdom, and that the scientists of the day are His superiors in intellect, thoughtful men must naturally shudder at the portentous shadows of coming events.

I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read, a few weeks ago, in a pamphlet by Edward B. Aveling (D. Sc. London, F.L.S., Fellow of University College, London), the following passage: "If such characters as these" (John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, Professor Huxley) "are wrong, who is to be right? Compare them with the character of Christ. They are his equals in all things save intellect, and there they are immeasurably His superiors." ("The Value of the Earthly Life," p. 44.)

If this is the teaching that is to supersede the Gospel, surely the evils denounced by that Gospel must rule, if not the outward ways and fashions of the multitude, at least their inward impulses and desires.

Although I am not now writing for unbelievers, but Christians, I have purposely called attention to this outcome of Rationalism; because, if private judgment is to supersede Divine authority, there is no real difference at bottom between this quasi-Christian teaching and the most pronounced free-thought. It is only a question of time, when private judgment, having swept away other mysteries of Christian Faith, will lay its impious hands on that Bliss which has ever been the hope of Christians, or that terrible sanction which, through "the fear of the Lord" and the dread of His justice, has hitherto kept the restless world in something like order.

What is the worth of an eternity of happiness, or the dread of one of inconceivable misery, which, resting on a foundation of sand, must sooner or later be carried away by the surging and ungovernable waters of total unbelief?

This is the main point which I wish to put plainly before my readers. There is no such thing as Christian Hope, if there is no Divine authority to sustain it. Surely

it does not require any amount of learning or trained reasoning to grasp this argument in its entirety. Any one who cares to think may see its force in an instant, and see too that it is unanswerable.

If eternity of punishment for the reprobate depends on popular opinion, and is to be swayed to and fro by the ever-changing views of popular sentiment, it ceases to be a Divine dogma. It is a mere human invention.

It may seem to be founded on the written word of Revelation; but that word is, in the hands of private judgment, "a dead letter." If it pleases men of learning and position and society to say that "for ever and ever" has a certain meaning opposed to the notion of eternal duration, and there is no Divine authority to control these views, it is not the letter of Scripture that determines the ground of hope, but a mere guess which may happen to fall in with the prevailing sentiment.

What matters it if our Divine Lord has said, "The wicked shall go into everlasting fire," if private judgment, backed by high names, declares that He meant nothing of the kind? The men who speculate in this way on the meaning of Scripture, may call themselves orthodox ministers of the Christian religion, and assure the public that they have gone carefully into the whole question, and that they have caught the correct meaning, and moreover that they have prayed earnestly for light from above; they are as much Rationalists, as those who vaunt the philosophy of progress above the intellectual capacity of Christ.

Christian Hope, or "Eternal Hope," or Hope however characterized, as the pole-star of the Christian life, becomes at once, under this process, as a mere "will-o'-the-wisp" that must lead multitudes to destruction.

For, if an eternity of punishment rests not on Divine authority, or the explanation of an Infallible and Divinely commissioned teacher, an eternity of bliss is placed precisely in the same position.

It is a delightful dream, if you will, but only a dream, and it must some day or other melt away into the indistinctness of a faded and dim transparency.

How shall a hope like this, fainter far than the traditional belief which, in times long gone by, led men, in their desire to propitiate a Zeus or a Poseidon,—mere creatures of the imagination,—even to sacrifice an Iphigenia,—sustain the bare elements of a forgotten faith against the selfishness of brutal appetite? Alas for the generations to come, when the strongest passions of unrestrained human nature shall battle amid the upheavals of nations and “the crash of worlds”!

Divine Hope, the source and centre of all desires that war against the spirit, is, according to the Catholic Church, intimately allied to Divine Faith. It is not the same virtue, for there may be Faith without Hope. “The devils believe and tremble;” but there can be no Divine Hope that does not rest on the solid and immutable basis of Divine Faith. For, as the Apostle says, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Heb. xi. 1).

Hope is not a positive assurance of Divine favor, as Luther madly taught. There is no respectable body of his countrymen who, however they exalt his name, would care to confide their eternal welfare to so vague and uncertain a sentiment. Some poor pious souls, who have been trained by this school of thought, may be able to work up their excited feelings to what they consider an absolute assurance of the Heavenly gift. God help

them, if in their ignorance of their own presumption, and of the tricks of their spiritual enemy, they rest on this broken reed! How frail and perishable it looks to the eyes of those who have been taught "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling"! And with what a shudder they would contemplate their entry into the other world, and appearance before the awful tribunal of the Great Judge, if there was no power to bear them up, save this most insidious of all temptations!

Catholic Faith has nothing in common with the grim fanaticism of Calvin. The good Catholic is not disturbed, at his last hour, by gloomy speculations as to whether Christ died for him individually or not; as to whether his name may figure in the mystic scroll of the elect, or of the reprobate preordained to damnation from all eternity. He is helped by the good priest, or the pious members of his own family, carefully trained in the rudiments of Catholic Faith, to look with confidence to Jesus, who died for him individually, as well as for all mankind. The words of the Apostle, "I live in the Faith of the Son of God, who loved *me* and delivered Himself for *me*," flash comfort on his troubled soul, "brightening the storm" of physical woes "it cannot calm;" and he says with his expiring voice, "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*"—"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

This is no mere sentiment, depending on feelings of emotional fervor, stirred up from the shallow pool of human speculation. It is the echo of the words of Divine Faith, which, borne forever onward by the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, reach him even from the foot of the cross where Jesus died, repeating the self-same words.



He has received the Holy Communion, and he knows with a certainty stronger than that of the favored Job that "his Redeemer lives;" and that, made one with him in the adorable Eucharist, "he abideth in Christ, and Christ in him," and that the merciful Saviour will, according to His promise, preserved in all its purity and integrity by the same Infallible Church, "raise him up on the last day."

Nothing shows more clearly the unsteady and shifting character of a belief founded on private judgment, than the eagerness with which men catch at any theory that will promise to save them from the wrath to come. If the new-fangled notion is put forward by a man of undoubted genius and world-wide reputation, it is hailed with rapture, and the ungodly congratulate each other, and "make merry and send presents to each other," because the prophets who tormented them with the prospect of Divine vengeance, are supposed to be no more.

"The Eternal Hope" of Canon Farrar has, for this reason, been enthusiastically received by a large class, who see in its ingenious and learned arguments, the forcible expression of their own dim and shadowy aspirations. Alas for "the inhabitants of the earth," if surmises of human opinion, however plausible, form their ground of hope concerning the dark future, and that world of which we can know nothing, except through the glimpses afforded us by Divine and Infallible teaching!

It is scarcely to be wondered at that, in their perplexities about this awful problem, men who have rejected Divine authority and the teaching of the Church, and who yet cannot bring themselves to regard death as the end of all things for them individually, nor yet to place confidence in any human speculations, are tempted to

seek for some ground of hope in the misty labyrinths of Spiritism.

I have been told of a young fellow in this colony who fancied that he was wiser than the Church, and who, just as his father had passed away, declared to his friends that if he could by any means, no matter how daring, bring back the soul to tell him its experience, he would attempt it. Suppose he had found a medium who, like the Witch of Endor, undertook to evoke the spirits of the dead, and that in answer to his questions about the eternity of punishment, and the state of souls in the next world, he was told, either through knocks rapped out of furniture, or by words written by invisible hands, something that coincided with his own fancies. What a sorry ground of Hope would be afforded here! Yet I have no doubt that many join the Spiritists with no other object than, by their unholy tricks, to have a peep behind "the dark glass" which Providence has so wisely interposed between this life and the life to come.

They hear strange things, it is said, and receive communications, which sometimes fall in with preconceived notions, and sometimes conflict with them. That any people of ordinary intelligence and Christian training can attach weight to such delusions, or find, in the artifices of the spirits of deceit and darkness, a ground for hope, seems almost incredible. But there is no limit to the vagaries of individual judgment, when, gathering just so much as it pleases from the pages of the Scriptures, it presumes to form ideas of the life beyond the grave, independently and in defiance of Divine authority.

The devil was a liar from the beginning, and if he and his companions in misfortune choose to humor inquisitive folly by some external form of temptation, there is no

Christian who retains a vestige of Faith who should not know by instinct, that such communications are worthless and deceitful.

I have heard men argue that Spiritism is a sovereign remedy for materialism; but the Faith and Hope of an earnest Spiritist are no more like Christian Faith and Hope than the ravings of a demoniac are like the blessed visions that sustained the courage of the first martyr. The infatuated devotees of this dark art learn, sooner or later, how wretchedly they have been deceived; and if they have not been reduced to that pitiable state of weak-mindedness that borders on insanity and enslaves their intellects, they turn from the accursed thing with loathing and disgust.

I have been betrayed into these remarks by the knowledge I have acquired in the experience of more than thirty-five years of missionary life. I know well that one of the most ordinary temptations which assails a declining Faith, is the desire to gather information of the world beyond the grave, from those who have already passed the dread bourne.

They who seriously indulge in such reveries as these, have almost completely lost confidence in God, and are in a fair way to eternal darkness and despair.

Hope in this direction there is none. The unfortunate Dives hoped, that if one from the dead went to his brothers, and told them the secrets of his "place of torments," those he still loved might thus be saved from his misery. But he was assured by Divine Truth, speaking through the mouth of Abraham, that if his friends heeded not the teaching of the then existing Church, they would pay no regard to the testimony of one actually risen from the dead.

Let those who are silly enough to listen wilfully to this temptation be assured, that there is no possible way of evading the path marked out for men of good will by our Divine Saviour,—the path in which not even fools can err,—and that it is only by hearing the Church and obeying her voice they can securely hope to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

How transcendently beautiful! how serenely bright burns the star of Hope, unfolded by the Catholic Church to the view of her faithful children! No wonder that earnest Catholics, who love to ponder on “the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us” (Rom. viii. 18), are in time absorbed in its contemplation, and lose all desire for worldly pleasures. As the poet pictures to himself the exalted sentiments of those who love to study the works of the Omnipotent revealed in the starry heavens, and, in a transport of admiration, exclaims,

“ Who e’er saw them brightly shining  
And turned to earth without repining;  
Nor wished for wings to fly away,  
And mix with their eternal ray?”

so may we say of those who live in the Faith and Hope of Christ, the earth has no charms for them but those gleams of innocent joy which in a moment are gone, like the quickly fading beauty of the flowers with which they love to adorn the altar of the Incarnate God. They know that He has taught them to “seek first of all the Kingdom of God;” and bade them pray for the advent of His Kingdom, as, after His glory, the foremost object of all our petitions,—“Thy Kingdom come.”

The Catholic Church teaches all her children to hope for eternal life, and to hope also for the means of attaining this great end of our being. She bids sinners hope,

as well as the just, and lays down, as a fixed and eternal principle, that to despair of God's infinite mercy would be the crowning sin of a sinful life.

No doubt she warns them against the sin of presumption, and the enormity of continuing to offend God, because He is good, and patient, and long-suffering. But when the end comes, and the wretched sinner, who, in spite of repeated warnings and calls to repentance, finds himself on the verge of Judgment, and is filled with terror at the fearful prospect of falling, in a few short moments, into the hands of an angry God, every effort of the Catholic priest is directed to inspire hope, and the sorrow that springs from unbounded confidence in the mercy of the Great Being who alone can save him from eternal ruin.

It is well known, that there is no case of misery and distress that so thrillingly affects a Catholic congregation, as the grief of friends for one who seems to have the thought fixed in his mind, that his sins are too great to be forgiven. In Catholic countries, such a case as this—the bare possibility of any one dying in despair—seems naturally, and by a sort of instinct, to kindle the piety and ardent charity of every one who hears the afflicting news. Not only religious communities will join in continuous prayer, for the conversion of such a soul; but families will take up the matter, with more keen interest than if the earthly life of one dear to them was at stake. And when the glad tidings have gone forth, that the prodigal child has turned with true compunction to the Father in Heaven and to the Divine Saviour, there is a sense of relief amongst the whole neighborhood, that could scarcely be credited by those who have not witnessed such an event.



The fate of Judas, the death of one wild with despair and almost mad with terror, is the greatest evil by far to be apprehended by Catholic feeling, in this world of many trials and afflictions.

Strangers to our Faith, who have listened to the prayers of the Church prescribed for the dying, are generally more touched by their pathetic appeal to the Creator, in favor of weak nature, than with the most solemn portions of Catholic worship.

“Remember, O Lord, he is Thy creature, and admit him, who has no hope but in Thy mercy, to the Sacrament of Thy Reconciliation. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.” “May Christ deliver thee from torments, who was crucified for thee! May He deliver thee from eternal death who vouchsafed to die for thee!” These prayers, springing from the Faith and Hope and Charity of the Church of ages, recited alike for the spiritual welfare of the most persistent sinner, as for the saint, are, all through, most calculated to arouse and sustain hope, and unbounded confidence in Him “with whom there is mercy and abundant Redemption.”

When it is considered, that here there is no mere pious sentiment dictated by human notions of what might reasonably be expected from a God of infinite mercy, but that every thought and desire and petition has its origin in Faith, non-Catholics may have a glimpse, at least, of the consolation which the ministrations of religion and the prayers of the priest afford to the dying Catholic. It is not the soothing tone of voice, nor the kindness of manner, nor tender expressions of fatherly affection, that seem to pour a balm on the sufferings that precede the last agony: it is certain and immovable Faith, and the Hope that springs from Faith, that sustain the

soul in this terrible ordeal. The good Catholic knows that every sentence put into the mouth of the attendant priest, and every thought suggested by him, is the plain teaching of the spirit of truth—"household words" in the Church of God for over eighteen hundred years. And hence it is easily understood, that they who know the full security promised to those who hear the Church with the docility of little children, should feel, as the world is fading from their view, and earthly sights and sounds have ceased to reach the soul, and the silence and darkness of death is closing round, an instinctive desire to be caught to the bosom of the loving mother, who, from the days of the Apostles, has been the only mother of all who believe that Christ is the Son of God; and have, even in this last hour of their existence, learned to love Him above all things.

There is a prejudice, arising from ignorance, against the Church, as if she taught her children to confide in their own works, and in the intercession of Saints, rather than in the infinite merits of our Divine Saviour. There could not be a charge more unfounded.

If the Church bids us hope for a reward for any good we may have done purely for God's sake, it is not as if she taught that our best deeds were in themselves deserving of a recompense. Whatever good we do springs, in its very conception, from God's grace; it is this supernatural power that enables us to persevere and accomplish it; and if we hope for a reward, by co-operating with the Divine impulse and sustaining power, it is only because we are taught by the Church to have unbounded hope in the promises of Christ.

It is the unfailing promise of a merciful God, that alone establishes a right to reward in those who hear His Word

and keep it. The Council of Trent has defined that it is a heresy deserving anathema to say, that the just ought not to expect and hope for an eternal reward for the good works that have been done in God, through His mercy and in virtue of the merits of Christ, when they have persevered to the end in doing good and keeping the Divine Commandments. (Sess. VI., Cap. XVI., Canon XXVI.)

If it would be a grievous sin for even the most sinful to despair of the Divine mercy, it would be a still greater sin for those who have, through life, loved and served Him faithfully, to doubt of His fidelity to His promises.

St. Paul was thoroughly imbued with this doctrine when he said: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me at that day; and not to me only, but to them also who love His coming" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

How superior is this doctrine, even when viewed in itself,—so humble and so full of loving confidence in the Divine mercy,—to that positive assurance of imputed justice, which, amongst most Christians who are not Catholics, seems to constitute the essence of what they call Faith! I say what they call Faith, because, through the absence of Divine authoritative teaching, it is an assurance founded only on fallible human interpretation of the written Word of God. Real Faith excludes doubt; and real Faith is the only solid ground for Hope.

When it is said of the dead, who had built their hopes of eternal salvation on human formularies, and systems of belief invented by men, that "their end was peace," one who calmly considers the subject cannot help think-

ing of the Words of Holy Writ: "Even the prophets of Israel that prophesy to Jerusalem, and that see visions of peace for her: and there is no peace, saith the Lord God" (Ezechiel xiii. 16). Happy are they "who fall asleep in the Lord," when "they are taught of God," and by the Church which has authority from Him to teach: but that rest may be rudely broken, which is apparently enjoyed by those who prefer their own will to the Divine appointments.

The chosen people fancied to themselves that they were justified in their complaints, because God had not regarded their observance of the law. They had done what was commanded by the interpreter of God's will in their regard; they had not imagined to themselves a course of action which seemed to them good and comforting and full of hope. They, on the contrary, subjected their carnal appetites to the rigors of fasting, and afflicted their souls by severe penance; and so they cried out, "Why have we fasted, and Thou hast not regarded; have we humbled our souls, and Thou hast not taken notice?" And the prophet replies, in that passage which should be well remembered by those who will not hear the Church: "Behold in the day of your fast, your own will is found" (Isaias lviii. 3).

It seemed a fine thing to Saul, in the hour of his triumph over Amalec, to have prepared a splendid sacrifice out of the best of the flocks and herds of this accursed people. He had, he thought, fulfilled the orders communicated to him by the mouth of God's prophet; but he would do more, and testify his reverence for God in his own way, and he hoped that his reward would be great exceedingly, and therefore he said boastingly to Samuel, "I have fulfilled the Word of the Lord." He

little dreamt that by this rash act he had merited his reprobation. And Samuel said: "Doth the Lord desire holocausts and victims, and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifice; because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel, and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey" (1 Kings xv. 13, 23).

Our Divine Lord has said: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. vii. 21).

Hence I conclude that all that hope is vain and seductive which is not founded on simple, humble, and obedient Faith; and such Faith is absolutely impossible unless, through the teaching of a living, speaking, and infallible guide, we learn to know with certainty what God has taught.

Do I mean to say, therefore, that those whose "end is peace," and who seem to "fall asleep in the Lord," and who die in certain assurance of their eternal salvation, and full of reverent love for Jesus, are "even as others who have no hope"? God forbid! We know, by the teaching of the Church, that God loves those who love Him; and we may therefore hope that they who, by no fault of theirs, have been robbed of their reasonable Faith, and have grown up insensibly in error, but yet have tried to love and serve God according to their conscience, may receive, even at the eleventh hour, that illuminating grace from above, which will enable them in one glance to see their error and to detest it, and then tranquilly to resign themselves into the hands of God, full of hope in the infinite merits of their Divine Saviour.



Should any Christians, however, through presumption on the Divine mercy, be careless and indifferent about obeying God, and hearing the voice of the Church, and take their salvation into their own hands, either by the exercise of private judgment, or by following the teaching of guides as blind and fallible as themselves, they should learn betimes to fear the consequences of a fatal mistake, and a "fall into the pit," against which our Divine Lord has so plainly guarded us. (Matt. xv. 14.)

When they have had reasonable grounds for doubting this guidance and pay no attention to the matter, and make no attempt, by prayer and inquiry, to settle their doubts, and comfort themselves with the assurance that they are in a better position than superstitious Papists; or that one religion is just as good as another; and that no Christian can help doubting at times whether he is right or wrong: they should know that this is trifling with "the one thing necessary," and preparing the way for daring presumption, and disobedience to the commands of God, and the perversity of self-will which cuts away the ground of Christian and supernatural hope.

In the next chapter, I mean to show how intimately the great virtue of Charity, as well as Hope, is involved in the Faith that comes through hearing the Church of God.

## CHAPTER IX.

## Charity.

AT the close of his admirable sermon on the "Triumph of the Church," Cardinal Manning says: "And next as you have Faith, so you ought to have the warmth of Charity. Where there is light, there is warmth; and where there is greater light, there is greater warmth. Where there is perfect truth, there ought to be perfect charity. You who have the whole Revelation of God, ought to have the whole charity of God in you."

There is no doubt, as His Eminence so beautifully expresses it, "where there is perfect truth, there ought to be perfect charity." I would say in addition, where there is *not* this perfect truth, there cannot exist the virtue of charity in that wide sense in which this virtue is inculcated by St. Paul.

The charity that is in Christ Jesus, and which is to form the model of our Christian love for the neighbor, cannot be conceived as a possible virtue, without the plenitude of Faith. The reason for this is plain.

Charity, as the "new commandment," cannot be grounded on natural motives. Natural motives always involve the love of self; and a grain of selfishness is destructive of the very essence of Christian charity.

If we bring the virtue from the region of the abstract to the field of practical application, and view it in the concrete, we shall see at once the meaning of the words of the Apostle, "Charity seeketh not her own."

I suppose there never was, in the history of the Church, a spectacle of such glowing charity as that which animated the Christian flock that sprung into existence on the day of Pentecost. When the spirit of truth and Divine Love poured forth the germs of the new creation from the lips of St. Peter, the three thousand who were converted by the preaching of this Apostle must have realized to themselves the fulness of Faith and Love.

Those who received the Holy Ghost in those early times, for years after the sensible outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested by the gift of tongues, and other supernatural endowments, how ample were the gifts and graces which accompanied the sacramental rite of the imposition of hands, whereby the first converts received these extraordinary blessings. They must have been ampler still while yet the tongues of fire burned above the heads of the Apostles.

And what was the grand characteristic which pre-eminently distinguished the little flock from the "perverse generation" of Judaism and paganism, amid which it so suddenly sprung into existence? It was the unmistakable union of will and sentiment—"All they that believed were together, and had all things in common" (Acts ii. 44). And "when the Lord added daily to their society such as should be saved," "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32).

Now where there is one selfish passion working in the human heart, it keeps that heart effectually from uniting with other hearts. Take the purest love that can be imagined in this world, and it will break down and perish under such a contamination.

The selfish mother, the mother who loves the worldly incense offered to beauty, will forget the child of her

bosom. The husband who idolizes the woman who has given him her first love will forget her, and leave her and his children to perish in hunger and want and misery,—nay, more: he will rob them of the fruits of their hard industry,—if he allows his heart to be weaned from her and them by a selfish craving after intoxicating drink. Need I say how soon, and how fatally, selfish ambition, or pride, or avarice, or the passionate excitement of gambling, will trample upon the ruins of friendship, and stamp out the very elements of an affection that once seemed everlasting?

This is evidently the result of inordinate selfishness on any human love, no matter how real it once was, and how deeply seated in the heart; it prevents the union of one heart with another; and rises up, like a monstrous hydra or dragon, frightening away, by its very aspect, the approach of tender sentiments.

Of course the effects of selfishness are much more destructive when they come in contact with the Charity that is in Christ Jesus, and which He commanded His disciples to take up as the model of their love for one another. His love for the world was the most disinterested that could be conceived. He gave up everything, not only His life, but His honor, and all that belonged to Him as God, save only His sanctity, to make us happy, who could not contribute one iota to His happiness.

Hence I conclude that no selfish feeling can be conceived as coexistent with Christian Charity. Philanthropy, benevolence, natural kindness and amiability of disposition, can be imagined that will rise above any outward show of this feeling of self-love, which shocks even natural instincts.

But self-love is the most insidious of all human pas-

sions, and can veil its detestable features under the fairest forms. It will lurk at the bottom of what seem to be the noblest qualities of the natural man, and find its secret delight in the admiration that apparently generous sacrifices never fail to evoke, and in the gratification that invariably accompanies acts of kindness and beneficence.

It is easy to forgive an injury, when the reward is higher far in the inward sentiment, than the satisfaction of malignant hatred; and it requires no superhuman effort to strip ourselves of some cherished object for the sake of another, when we know from experience that this gift of money, or something as dear to us, will purchase an inward pleasure, superior to any that is afforded by the enjoyment of sense.

If this reasoning is applied to religious differences, and the estrangement that accompanies the *odium theologicum*, my readers will at once perceive its drift in connection with the impossible union of charity and the right of private judgment. Religious differences, when there is anything like earnestness of religious feeling, are fatal even to domestic peace.

The Catholic Church well knows this fact; and therefore uses every means in her power, consistent with human prudence, to divert her children from matrimonial connections with those of a different communion. Such unions must end, in case the non-Catholic person does not yield to the Divine authority of the Church, either in religious indifference or heart-burning dissensions. What a conflict it must be between the love of God above all things, and the love of the being to whom lasting love has been solemnly pledged, when these feelings come into actual antagonism!



Now, what I want to bring out clearly is, that any system of religious teaching which is opposed, in its principles, to the maintenance, or even existence, of supernatural charity, cannot possibly have formed part of the plan of our Divine Redeemer for the training and perfection of His disciples. It is evidently His blessed will that all who believe in His name should be brought into "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. iv. 3), that all might be "one body and one spirit," and have "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism."

When considering the little flock which accompanied Him through Judea, He looked forward to the development of the Church of all nations, He said, "And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be made one fold and one Shepherd" (John x. 16).

His prayer at the Last Supper, when he poured out the fondest desires of His loving heart, brings out His grand object so clearly, that no one can imagine for a moment that He contemplated "unity in vanity;" but a compact body professing, "with one mind and one mouth," the glory of God the Father.

How, by any strain of thought, can a plan like this fall in with the principle of private judgment, which has desolated Christendom with its almost innumerable and never-ending divisions?

Did He wish that Christians hearing His voice, and following His guidance, should be ever warring with each other; and, by their bitter dissensions and prejudices, that they should change the expression of pagan wonder and admiration at the Charity and bond of union of the early Christians, into the most severe and cutting sarcasm, that could be uttered against the Christian name?

The pagans used to say, in the primitive ages of Christianity, "See how these Christians love one another!" These words, in the mouth of an enemy of Christianity at the present day, would imply an intense irony, all the more severe and cutting, as it is felt by every thoughtful Christian, that our hopeless enmities are the chief scandal of our creed.

This state of things, which Christians of all denominations lament, is the natural consequence of private judgment as opposed to Divine authoritative teaching. Here are millions professing the great law of Charity as their main characteristic, and yet, as it has been cleverly said, "hating each other for the love of God."

There is something more in this well-known phrase than is generally imagined, and one would do well to notice the full bearing of the expression. If our dissensions arose from personal considerations, as between men and men, there might be some hope of compromise and unselfish concessions. But when the sacred name of God is invoked as the cause of these deplorable divisions, and men try to persuade themselves that they are doing Him a service by hating their brethren who differ from them, there is evidently no prospect whatever of even a semblance of union.

Let any one of common honesty ask himself what is the cause of this unquenchable hostility, and he will find but one answer possible; "*cela saute aux yeux*"—it strikes one in a moment. It is the principle of unrestrained free-thought and private judgment, introduced into Christendom by the leaders of the so-called Reformation.

As long as Christians were faithful to the principle of authoritative teaching, however they might differ on minor points of discipline and practice, and however hot

and angry might be the disputes of the schools on questions not defined by the Church, there existed a real union.

If a Council could not be summoned to determine matters called into doubt by new opinions, the Holy Father spoke "as one having authority" recognized by all; and "the Faith once delivered to the Saints" was upheld by his decision. "*Roma locuta est; res finita est*"—"Rome has spoken; the affair is settled"—is a well-known passage from the great Doctor of the fourth century—St. Augustine. It was well understood at the time when he lived and taught and wrote, and no amount of dust-throwing and ingenious historical criticism can obscure its meaning.

In this way there was no possibility of scandalous discord; and if it was not their own most grievous fault, Christians in all parts of the world were bound together most intimately as members of the one fold.

That passage of the same St. Augustine which rung in the ears of Dr. Newman till, like the legendary bells of Whittington, it brought him back to the old Church—"Securus judicat orbis terrarum." "This Church of Rome, safe and secure in the position given her by her Divine Founder, judges the controversies of the whole world,"—stands like the Pyramids, and bids defiance to the ever-shifting polemical sands of ages. Rather, like a mighty sledge-hammer, it dashes to pieces every little nut of adverse criticism flung at the Rock of Ages.

To use his own words, in reference to his once-cherished theory of "the middle way" which, for many years, he imagined might guide him and the party who looked up to him for guidance and advice through the controversies with Rome,—“By those great words of the ancient

Father, interpreting and summing up the long and varied course of ecclesiastical history, the theory of the *via media* was absolutely pulverized." ("Apologia," p. 212.)

If it be clear, from what I have said, that the rule of private judgment must necessarily lead to disunion, and that disunion in points of religion is incompatible, not only with Supernatural Charity, but even with that semblance of Christian forbearance better known by the name of "Broad Liberalism" or "Indifference,"—whilst the Catholic Rule of Faith as necessarily leads to that unity which is "the bond of peace,"—can there be a doubt as to which rule is *the* rule laid down by Divine teaching for our guidance?

Certainly, viewing the question for a moment in itself and, as the schoolmen say, *a priori*, there cannot be a shadow of doubt.

The Catholic Rule of Faith is the only one that could have been established by Him who knew well that "scandals should come," and that His disciples would always need a guide to keep them in the one Fold.

He who prayed so fervently that not only His Apostles, but those who "believed in their teaching" to the end of the world, should be "one, as He is one with the Father," and who proclaimed, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another," could not, without a glaring inconsistency, have established that other so-called Rule which has, from its very nature and necessary consequences, split up Christendom into contending sects.

If it be argued that the Catholic Rule of Faith miserably failed in practice, and led to superstition and corruption so great, that the thinking part of mankind were compelled to protest against its shameful errors, I will

not enter into this part of the subject, beyond laying down some sound principles.

Christ is God. He cannot deceive us in His promises. He certainly promised that He would be with His Apostles and their successors in the work of teaching to the end of time. He certainly promised that He would send them the Spirit of Truth to teach them all truth, and to abide with them forever.

It is therefore, on the very face of it, manifest that the teaching Church, so guided, could not teach these errors. It would be an endless task to go into the much-disputed question of fact as to the errors taught, or the time when they were introduced by the everlasting Church. Our Divine Lord, who rejoiced that "the poor had the Gospel preached to them," could never have contemplated that these historical difficulties should be discussed by those who could have neither the learning nor the time to discuss them.

His disciples were never meant by Him to spend their lives in endless and angry discussions on these much-controverted points; such a notion would completely upset the possibility of calm undoubting Faith in His word. No one could, with the docility so highly commended by Him, "hear the Word of God and keep it." It was, as many of the Fathers say, a higher merit in His Blessed Mother than even her exalted dignity as "Mother of God," that she so received and treasured in her heart the message announced to her by the angel, and His own teaching, and the words of those who were inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Such Faith as this would, under the supposed case of the corruption of the teaching body, be a manifest impossibility, not only to the unlearned, but to the most



profound scholars also. It would, in truth, require more than a long life to glance hurriedly over the ponderous tomes, that have been written for and against this view. We Catholics believe that every difficulty raised on this point of fact, has been answered again and again, conclusively, by men of the largest learning and the keenest critical acumen; that Councils of the Church, working on the fixed principle of tradition, of never accepting any dogma that has not been either explicitly or implicitly taught in preceding Councils, fully discussed and refuted these charges, whenever they were advanced.

There the matter rests, as regards the great bulk of mankind. If this question of fact is to be settled by Christians, whether, on such and such occasions, the visible, ever-existing, and teaching Church did or did not define and propose to the faithful erroneous doctrine, then that Faith "without which it is impossible to please God" is not within their reach: and not believing, they must necessarily, according to the express words of our Divine Lord, be condemned at the great judgment. "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). And let it be noted that this condemnation had reference to the non-belief of the Gospel, or *all* the things which Christ commanded His Apostles to teach.

In other words, our Divine Lord, who is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. iii. 9), effectually excludes the great body of those who profess to believe in His name from a chance of salvation. This is a monstrous proposition; and yet it logically and evidently follows from the supposition that the Church of Christ ever taught error in any shape or form, for to teach one error opens up all the complex question.

That supposition is therefore just as monstrous, and

absurd, and untenable as the conclusion which should follow from it, and must, therefore, according to the first principles of sound reasoning, be absolutely rejected.

It would be impossible to imagine how any body of Christians could seriously maintain a position so extravagant, if we did not take into account the fact, that unless, some way or other, they make a show of defending it, they are bound before all mankind to obey and hear the Church against which their fathers once impiously rebelled.

Of course this is humiliating, but it would be better far that they submitted to any humiliation in this world, than bear the awful fate which awaits those who attempt to scandalize even the least of God's children.

There are millions of faithful souls who are kept out of the Catholic Church by these oft-repeated stories of erroneous teaching and shameful corruption.

History, since the Reformation, is now admitted, by some of the leading writers of the day, to have been a shameless conspiracy against truth and the Catholic Church; and yet these glaringly false accusations are repeated even in rudimentary books compiled for the instruction of youth.

They "who consent to such things" should ponder on the terrible words addressed by our Divine Lord to those who thus scandalize, or place a stumbling-block in the way of innocent simplicity. "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6).

If, in addition to the crime of depriving these little ones (and with children may be numbered the poor

and the unlearned) of the possibility of Divine Faith, we consider that another, and if possible more grievous, crime, is committed, by uprooting Charity from their hearts, then it behooves those who wilfully lend themselves to the work of calumniating the Spouse of Christ, and exciting contempt and hatred of their Catholic brethren, to consider their position. They who make "quarrels and dissensions and sects" are placed by the Apostle in the same category with those who are guilty of murder; and he declares that they "shall not obtain the Kingdom of God" (Gal. v. 19-21).

These are bold words, and men who differ from me will say, "Are not you violating Charity and exciting dissensions by insinuating such charges against your fellow-Christians?"

I answer at once without hesitation. Show me a word that I have ever written, accusing any denomination of Christians of the crimes which are continually charged, even in these enlightened days, when the old craze against Popery is somewhat sobered by the assaults of free-thought, against my Catholic brethren, by men who profess to be teachers of charity; and I will submit to the most humiliating apology that may be required of me by the individual or party that proves the accusation.

No; every honest feeling that is in me would rise up against such baseness, and with God's help I will never breathe a word against the fair fame of any man who differs from me in religion, because he so differs. Others may call me, as they do my Catholic brethren—in pulpit and in meeting—idolater, blasphemer, and what not. I have nothing to say against them but this,—that if they, knowingly and willingly, charge the Catholic Church with teaching hideous, and immoral, and unchristian doctrine,

they are sinning grievously, not against men, but against the Redeemer Himself, who has said to the first lawfully commissioned teachers of His doctrine, and of course in them to their successors in the ministry, "He that despiseth you despiseth Me."

It is no justification for a calumny that it has been uttered by others, and by men of great name and position. Even the civil law will take cognizance of and punish the paper or the journal, that will propagate such slanders against individuals.

Of course the old Church will take no steps to vindicate her character before the world; for the world hates her, as it did her Divine Founder. She prays ever with Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Still the crime is not the less deserving of Divine chastisement whenever it is not in a manner made excusable by unreasoning and ignorant prejudices.

There are many who abuse the Catholic Church and her doctrines and practices who ought to know better. God help them if, by these ill-considered and unfounded charges, they scandalize the little ones of Christ!

I am only arguing against false principles, and I maintain that I have proved to the satisfaction of every intelligent human being who reads these pages without passion or prejudice, that they who charge the Catholic Church with teaching grave error, either in the past or at the present time, are, by opposing her Divine Authority, rendering reasonable Faith in Revelation an impossibility and Divine Supernatural Charity equally impossible.

In the next chapter, I propose to treat of authoritative teaching outside the Catholic Church, and to show that, however strongly it may be claimed, it is private judgment after all, and has no other basis than that which is essentially and entirely human.

## CHAPTER X.

**Authoritative Teaching Outside the Catholic Church.**

I FEEL, and have felt since I formed the plan of this book, that the subject on which I am about to enter is the most grave to which I have ever devoted my earnest attention. It is not that it presents to my mind serious difficulties. I believe that I have, by careful reading, set clearly before me at least its most prominent features, and all that it substantially involves. But I am almost at a loss how to present them to the public; whether I shall simply sketch them in bold outline, or bring them out in those shades and colors which may develop more strikingly their abnormal peculiarities. This is a point on which I have pondered over and over again. I look at it seriously, not only from natural feelings, and considering the effect it may have on sensitive minds deeply interested in the question, and who believe or endeavor to believe that they have a Divine authority for "the Faith that is in them;" but from higher considerations, intimately associated with the eternal welfare of those who differ from me.

We are taught by the Catholic Church to regard the eternal salvation of even one soul, for whom Jesus Christ died, as a matter of more importance than the material gain, apart from the interests of eternity, of a people, or a nation, or even the whole world. What, in fact, is this transitory life, whether of an individual or of a multitude,



compared to that future life, dimly shadowed though it be in the pages of Revelation, which will never end? And if I should, meaning to do good, wreck and ruin the eternal hopes of even one soul by imprudently upheaving its pious Faith, how shall I hope for pardon from the Great Being who loves this one soul as of infinite value?

In all I have written about Faith, this consideration has been ever present to my mind, and I have carefully noted the difference there is between pious, simple, and trusting belief in the Great Saviour of mankind, and what the Apostle calls "*rationabile obsequium*"—"a reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1), or the "obedience of the Faith" founded on sound principles.

There are millions of souls, not externally members of "the one Fold," who are perfectly satisfied in their conscience with the religion in which they have been brought up, and who may be blameless in the eyes of God for the errors of their forefathers. They have a fragmentary belief in the chief doctrines of the Catholic creed; they have been, most probably, validly baptized; they try to serve God faithfully, and endeavor to love Him above all things, and so may hope for eternal life; and if I should disturb this saving Faith of one of these, and, by a bold exposition of the unreasonableness of their security, leave them hopeless wanderers amid the labyrinths of private judgment, what comfort shall it be to me if a few others are moved by my words to seek refuge and rest in the bosom of the everlasting Church?

One thought alone reassures me. We live in times when even the little ones of the flock of Christ must notice what is going on around them, either in the daring attitude of unbelief or in the marked fluctuations of religious observance. If such as these exercise at all their

reasoning faculties, they must think seriously on what is individually required of them by God as absolutely necessary for salvation.

Their fathers and mothers, or those removed from the troubles of the present restless age, may have lived and died in peace, blissfully ignorant of any other way to Heaven but that which was pointed out to them by pious hands. But now there is no place for this dreamy rest; and from the ignorant, as well as from the learned who are weary of the continual strife of wild theories and opinions and speculations about the awful future, there must go up continually before God the cry of anxious souls, "What must we do that we may be saved?"

Believing this to be a fact, becoming every day more apparent to thoughtful minds, I have resolved to speak out plainly, and answer this all-important question to the best of my ability.

Let those who, like myself, have passed more than the half of the time ordinarily allotted to human life, look back for a moment and contrast either the present open manifestations towards natural religion, shown in the extreme levity of talk on sacred subjects, the neglect of church-going, and the absence of any external marks of piety: or, in the opposite direction, the ever-progressive movement towards the long-disused practices of the old Church, with what they remember, thirty or forty years ago, and they will easily understand my meaning.

When I was young, there were, in Great Britain and the Colonies, very few who dared to talk Atheism or Deism openly. People shuddered, if even a ripple of the wave of Infidelity, which had devastated Continental Europe in the last century, disturbed their religious tranquillity. Whatever they believed, whether they hated

Popery with all the virulence of Dissent, or preferred the respectable attitude of worshippers in the National Church of England, they at least believed in Christ and His plentiful Redemption; they feared a personal God who was to judge them; dreaded Hell, and hoped to gain Heaven. They looked with amazement on any one who was said to scoff at these tremendous truths, and were absolutely ignorant of the meaning of Agnosticism.

But how is the case now? Why, even beardless youngsters will boast that they have shaken off the trammels of Christian worship, and, almost unconscious of any irreverence, laugh at what they call the simple credulity of their fathers.

I do not speak of Catholic youth, for Catholic children, who are trained in their religion by pious parents and earnest priests, are ever the same in all times. They have nothing to learn in the way of religion from an unbelieving world, and they rest securely in the truth transmitted from the days of the Apostles by the Divine authority of the Church. But outside the pale of the Catholic Church, he must be blind who, come to an age to notice passing events, does not perceive that old creeds and formularies, compiled by human wisdom, are rapidly breaking up; and that soon the most matured judgment will be perplexed to know what new form of belief is coming next.

How our fathers would have stared, if they saw Protestant ladies in the garb of nuns striding boldly through the streets, and Protestant churches, that could scarcely be distinguished from Catholic places of worship in their ritual, starting up in all directions!

Even those who wrap themselves up in the soothing robe of emotional Christianity and dream of ecstasies and

the charms of pietism, must often feel their rest disturbed by the signs of the times.

And therefore I say, every one capable of thinking must think, and think seriously, on the momentous question "What is truth?" or what are they to believe and do, that they may have a reasonable hope of securing life eternal?

Hence if what I am about to say, in this chapter about authoritative teaching outside the Catholic Church, may disturb the pious faith of any one, it is only anticipating, by a few years at most, the natural consequences of the religious ferments of the day.

I may as well lay down at once the proposition which I wish to establish, and it is this: Outside the Catholic Church, that is to say, the Church spread over the whole world, and in union with the See of Rome, there is in reality no Divine teaching authority. There are Churches which claim to have this authoritative teaching. But if they claim for themselves a teaching that is inspired by the Spirit of Truth, and therefore infallible, they manifestly cut the ground from under their feet. For they cannot assume to themselves a gift which Christ did not give to the Church established by Him to teach all nations. If the Church established by Christ was not in truth infallible, no other Church can claim this privilege. If, on the other hand, the old Church actually, according to the promises of Christ, could not err, they who have rebelled against her must necessarily be in error.

If, then, no Church but the one founded in the beginning by Christ can claim the power of teaching infallibly the meaning of revealed doctrine, I maintain there is no such thing as revealed religion amongst

them: and all the creeds and formularies and articles and constitutions, which are supposed to determine Faith on the written Word of God, are simply the outcome of Rationalism.

Let me make the argument plainer; for, seeing that the spirit of the age is rapidly sweeping away even the traditional and fragmentary belief of primitive Christianity, I need not fear the consequences, to pious and simple Faith, of pressing it to its logical consequences.

One of the articles of the Church of England asserts, that no Church can claim to itself the power of teaching the revealed truth with infallible certainty. If this be true, we can have no positive certainty, that any dogma supposed to be contained in the Bible has been actually revealed by God.

Critical analysis of the Holy Book shows, that every such supposed dogma is susceptible of different and, in most cases, of contradictory meanings: and if we have to fall back on the Lockian principle of testing every supposed dogma by its reasonableness, what is this but to say that Reason is supreme; and that all our knowledge of God and His nature, and the soul, and the future state, is founded, not on the Word of God, but on Reason alone?

And if we press the point still farther, it comes to this: How can Reason teach us anything about which Reason can know next to nothing? Reason cannot give us an adequate idea of the nature of the Infinite; Reason cannot picture to itself the nature of a spirit, or tell us what is this soul which is the source of our life. Reason breaks down altogether, when it attempts to grapple with the problem of life, even in the lowest organism to be found in the world. Reason can have no experience of



that which is eternal, and therefore can determine nothing absolutely about the future life, or know with infallible certainty, whether there is or is not a future at all. So that, without a Divinely inspired and living guide, we are ultimately bound to come to the "Unknown and the Unknowable" of Agnosticism.

I know that there are certain truths about God and a future state which natural reason can demonstrate. Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church. But then the demonstration of these truths requires serious and profound thought; and in a restless age like this, when, to use the expressive words of an American writer, "men are born tired," few are capable of creating in their minds a clear conviction on these transcendental subjects.

Even the philosophers of old miserably erred in their efforts to sound the deep well of their interior consciousness; and were led astray from truth, even by the careful study of the phenomena of nature. Socrates, in his old age, sacrificed a cock to an imaginary deity, and mistook the suggestions of a demon for the inspirations of wisdom. Even the immortal Plato, enlightened though he was by the study of the sacred books of the Hebrews, and thus enabled to penetrate the veil which hides the Divine essence from the view of ordinary mortals, lost himself in a wild confusion and exaggeration of ideal doctrines, which are revolting to common-sense, and useless for the practical guidance of mankind.

There is nothing in such guesses and speculations as are dignified in this century by the name of Philosophy, to afford a solid resting-place for serious thought, or sound principles that may stem and control the impetuosity and waywardness of sensual passion.

These are subjects which, to use a hackneyed phrase,

"no fellah can understand." The truth is, not one in ten thousand cares to trouble himself about them. The busy multitude regard such things as tiresome riddles, and are disposed, with the laughing ease of Ethiopian choristers, "to give it up," if a question bearing in this direction is proposed to them.

Hence I say that, if there is no living infallible guide to teach us the meaning of the written Word of God, there is no Revelation that can be securely trusted. The truths embodied in the Holy Book will be stripped of their beauty by the ravages of free inquiry ; they will be scarred and withered and blighted by the fever of criticism, and, sooner or later, lose all hold not only on the minds of thoughtful readers, but on their hearts also.

I do not hold, with Cardinal Newman, that there is no medium between Atheism and Catholicity. I think there is, at least for the multitude who do not reason out their thoughts. This is no doubt what His Eminence means when he says that "There is no medium in true philosophy between Atheism and Catholicity," and that "a perfectly consistent mind, under these circumstances in which it finds itself here below, must embrace either the one or the other." But when few are "perfectly consistent," and scarcely any are guided in their reasoning by "true philosophy," it practically comes to this, that there may be, and that there actually is, a certain amount of belief in natural religion, or fragmentary Christianity, even when men obstinately refuse to hear the Church.

There may exist what I have called that pious Faith which I so much fear to disturb, and which I would not dare to trouble, if the signs of the times were not absolutely perplexing, and filling with intense anxiety about the necessary means of salvation even the great mass who

used to be perfectly satisfied, and at entire peace with their conscience, in believing just as their fathers did before them.

It is most interesting to follow out the plain and simple reasoning of the Cardinal's philosophy. It has the clear ring of the sterling metal about it, and even an uninformed mind can catch the unmistakable soundness of its truth. He says, "I hold this still" (the opinion just quoted); "I am a Catholic by virtue of my believing in a God; and if I am asked why I believe in a God, I answer, that it is because I believe in myself, for I find it impossible to believe in my own existence (and of that fact I am quite sure) without believing also in the existence of Him, who lives as a personal, all-seeing, all-judging Being in my conscience." ("Apologia," page 323.)

This sums up, in a few words, the whole argument; and effectually disposes of those smart sayings which are often, in these days, mistaken for cogent and unanswerable reasoning against the claims of Christianity, as well as those of the Church, on the human conscience. Smart men love to say, "On what does that proof rest? And then that other—show me the solid basis on which you are piling up these proofs. Is it not, after all, the story of the tortoise at the bottom of the whole thing, supporting the entire edifice of Religion, Church, and the Universe?"

You cannot doubt your own existence; there is what holds the place of the imaginary tortoise. You exist, and you feel in your inward individual conscience that there is a God above you, and that this all-wise and infinitely bountiful Being must, from His very nature, supply even the least of His rational creatures with a reasonable ground for the Faith which He requires as a

necessary condition to salvation. Such reasonable ground can be found only in a Church which, by its unerring guidance, will lead us up to the very source of truth. The ultimate guarantee of the Divine Revelation is the Divine authority of the Church.

This reasoning brought the grandest mind of our age to hear and obey the Catholic Church. Of course his conversion was the work of the supernatural grace of God ; but had he not been brought, step by step, to understand that the rock hewn out of the mountain by unseen hands, and placed immovably as the foundation of the imperishable work of Christ, was the only secure resting-place for his weary spirit, he might never have sought in earnest prayer that Divine help which has made him to-day one of the most humble and devoted of the children of the Catholic Church.

Would that others who are disturbed and anxious about their salvation would look in the same direction ! Then might there be a hope that, as the ever-increasing anxiety about their eternal welfare spreads amongst men of good will side by side with the growth of impiety and unbelief in the thoughtless and reckless, all who sincerely love Jesus Christ, and believe in his name, might be brought into "the one Fold."

I have shown that no Church but the Catholic Church, in communion with the See of Peter, claims the power of teaching with infallible certainty what God has revealed. I have shown, further, that no other Church can, with anything like consistency, dare to make such a claim. It belongs essentially and exclusively to the oldest Church in Christendom ; and who shall say that this is not the Church founded by our Divine Lord on Peter, and now, as ever, firmly united to the same Holy See ?

“But,” it will be said, “does it follow that there are not in Christendom other Churches that teach truth, and teach truth with authority binding on the members belonging to them?”

I answer at once. There are other Churches besides the Roman Catholic which teach with authority, and which teach certain truths of Revelation. But they do not teach the truth under the guidance of an ever-indwelling Divine Spirit of truth, and the authority they exercise over the members of which they are composed, is not a Divine authority. The teaching, and the governing power, in these Churches, are both absolutely human in their origin, human and fallible in their operation, and human, fallible, and powerless over the conscience of mankind.

The reason simply is that they, one and all, disclaim the quality of infallibility. They openly profess that they are not guided by the spirit of truth, and consequently they cannot teach with certainty what God has taught.

If pressed on this point, they are bound to declare that the doctrines which their founders have formulated from the Bible, are the creeds and formularies and constitutions of fallible men who may have been mistaken.

The Anglican Church, at least that large and respectable body of Anglicans who affect the name of Catholic, but who are generally known as the High-Church party, endeavor, in many ways, to evade this humiliating position. But, as Cardinal Manning says, “The Church of England formally and expressly denies the Divine authority of the Church. The perpetual and ever-present assistance of the Holy Spirit, whereby the Church, in every age, is not only preserved from error, but enabled at all



times to declare the truth, that is, the infallibility of the living Church at this hour; this truth the Anglican Church in terms denies." ("England and Christendom," page 120.)

As far as my reading goes, and I have studied the question carefully, not with a view of urging points polemical, but to find out the real state of the case, the matter in the Anglican Church stands thus:

Putting aside the contention that the Anglican Church is as old as the Roman Catholic Church, which some thoroughly honest men may perhaps believe, but which, in all its phases of subjective conception, is never seriously regarded by the theologians on either side, the point seems to be this: The Anglican Church, in its articles, founding its claim on the declaration that, as the great Patriarchal sees had taught error, so the Catholic Church in communion with the see of Peter also taught error, error of the worst character, idolatry even, cannot possibly claim for itself a privilege not secured to the oldest Christian Church in the world. There is no plausible ground, therefore, for any Church of later date claiming a privilege which the Church having the clearest claim to be the very Church established by our Divine Lord has not.

This settles at once any pretension to the character of an infallible guide, in the sense of Cardinal Manning, whose words I have just quoted.

The Anglican Church, therefore, whether High or Low, Broad or Narrow, is outside the bounds of any right to infallibility. The other pretensions of the High-Church party, set forth by its adherents as immensely superior to Dissent in any form, in the matter of authoritative teaching, are all reducible to the same level. Ra-

tionalism, pure and simple, is the basis of this authority ; and Rationalism is not certainly Divine.

I am writing for the public, who have neither time nor inclination to go into the minutiae of polished reasoning, and who I believe desire to know, in the fewest words possible, how the case stands, as between the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church in communion with, and governed by, the Holy See ; and, therefore, I do not make any effort to mince matters, but to give very briefly the results of my reading.

It all comes to this. The Anglican Church, as a teaching body, whether in Convocation or by the voice of individual Bishops, or individual Parsons, or directed by the Privy Council, can give those who look up to her for guidance in matters of Faith, no assurance that rises one jot above the human teaching of any sect.

Human learning, ability, genius, and all these qualities which eminently distinguish the Divines, who have enjoyed, for so many generations, the fruits of Catholic liberality in the universities of England, cannot, however, raise human teaching by one appreciable unit as regards Infallible certainty, above the emotional sayings of those who trust in the private spirit. Let us see what is in truth the principle which, amid many jarring and conflicting views, is supposed to supply the place of Divine authoritative teaching.

Cardinal Manning quotes, in the introduction to "England and Christendom," an extract from an Essay on the "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England," a passage which seems to me to give the shortest and most complete answer to this question. I give the substance of the views of this essay, in the words of His Eminence: "The author gives as his opinions that the period of Ra-

tionalism closed with 1830. I believe the reverse to be true. The inchoate or partial Rationalism of private judgment, criticising and measuring Christianity by reasonableness" (the principle of Locke), "came to an end when the reaction towards authority and Divine certainty commenced ; but the period of complete and consistent Rationalism formally opened by a new reaction against this revived claim of authority, commenced about five or six years later. The essay above quoted proves beyond a doubt, that, from the time of Locke down to the time of Whately" (not so many years ago), "the reasonableness of Christianity, that is the credibility of its doctrines tested by Reason, was the dominant theology of Anglicans. This is essential, though undeveloped and unconscious Rationalism. But it is the basis of the whole Anglican system." (Introduction, xlvii.)

There is a further move in this direction of later years, which any one, who cares to observe its symptoms, may see at a glance : it is the Rationalism of Germany, which supposes all truth to be contained within the limits of the Reason, and excludes even the bare idea of anything of a supernatural character.

Farther on the Cardinal remarks,—“There can be little doubt that this disbelief and exclusion of the supernatural in religion represents the mind and tendency of the majority of English laymen.”

I think that this disposes completely of a claim to Divine authoritative teaching in the Anglican Communion.

A good deal is said nowadays about the Greek Church, and the probable union of “the Anglican branch” with this withered stem, kept alive by Mahommedan patronage, or the support of the Holy Synod of Russia.

To all this I say—Dust—dust ! Fine writing may bring some deluded votaries of the system to fancy great things from a possible union of the Eastern Church ; and that, by such a union, Anglicanism may be in a position to dictate terms to Rome.

But the Greek Church, still clinging as it does, to the seven sacraments, and the Real Presence, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the honor due to the Blessed Mother of God, will, notwithstanding its degraded position, have nothing whatever to do with those who, in their formularies, trample on the fundamental mysteries of Christianity.

The idea of union has been exploded long ago ; and when I hear laymen of fair education in the Anglican Church, speak hopefully of a move in this direction, I cannot help thinking that either they have not inquired deeply into the matter, or that they have not been fairly dealt with by those to whom they look for instruction in all that concerns their dearest interests.

There is one thing I must say that astonishes me, and, as I am now advanced in life, and looking forward to the near approach of the awful Judgment, I cannot, by any effort of my mind, reconcile it with Catholic instincts.

There are clergymen of the High-Church party, distinguished by their learning and blameless lives, and their burning zeal for the welfare and progress of what they regard as their mother Church ; and they, knowing as well as Cardinal Newman, or Cardinal Manning, or any of the illustrious men who have recently left the Anglican Church to become members of the one Fold, that this "Church of their Baptism," as they call it, cannot afford any certain or infallible teaching, yet take upon themselves to answer for the eternal salvation of the

many who appeal to them for advice and direction in their religious perplexities, and bid them remain as they are, and tell them that it would be a burning shame for any Anglicans to join the Church of Rome.

What, in sober earnest, does this mean? "The Church of their Baptism" can only be, if there is any meaning in the phrase, the one true Church of Christ. Their fathers left this Church of their Baptism through excited feelings, when few comparatively had the learning to weigh the claims boldly advanced by rapacious tyranny under the guise of national loyalty, against the rights of the Mother given them by Christ. And these men, without any "reasonable service" that binds them to the Church roughly imposed upon them by human and arbitrary authority, and without any safe ground of standing for themselves before God, confidently assure those who trust in their guidance, to persevere in their error until death.

God forgive them! The responsibility they take upon themselves is too awful, to find a justification in words, however specious.

In my long experience of missionary life, having to deal with souls who desired to find rest and peace, out of the whirlwind of dissensions, in the bosom of Catholicity, I know of only one Anglican minister, who had the honesty and generosity to say, "Follow the dictates of your conscience, pray much, and God bless you!"

These men, who scruple not to drag others with them into the depths of heresy and schism, will have much to answer for. They may be infallible Popes in their own estimation; but the flimsy veil that covers these high pretensions, will be, one day, rudely torn to atoms.

As regards the claims of Pietism, and the theory of



Calvin, that "Scripture shines sufficiently by its own light" and private inspiration, and "the inward testimony," and the gushing things which lecturers pour forth in praise of the overwhelming evidence of the written word, testifying to itself, I have nothing to say.

These subjective arguments do not come within the scope of sound reasoning. They are all answered by a glance at the vagaries of private judgment. Such bitter dissensions, springing from this fertile source of error, are so plainly before the whole world, that he who does not heed them, would not listen to the warnings of one risen from the dead.

If men could only be brought to lay aside their prejudices, and think really for themselves, they would soon find an answer to their perplexities, and to their earnest cry, "What must we do in order to be saved?" in the contemplation of the old Church, ever calm in the midst of the troubles that agitate the world, and never so happy and rejoicing, as when "it is accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 41).

I will close this chapter with a passage from Cardinal Newman: it bears strongly on the unthinking spirit of our times.

"Turn away from the Catholic Church, and to whom will you go? It is your only chance of peace and assurance in this turbulent, changing world. There is nothing between it and scepticism, when men exert their reason freely. Private creeds, fancy religions, may lie huge and lifeless, and cumber the ground for centuries, and distract the attention, and confuse the judgment of the learned; but in the long-run it will be found that either the Catholic Religion is verily and indeed the coming in of the unseen world in this, or that there is nothing

positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we are going. Unlearn Catholicism, and you become Protestant, Unitarian, Deist, Pantheist, sceptic in a dreadful, but infallible succession, only not infallible, by some accident of your position, of your education, and of your cast of mind; only not infallible, if you dismiss the subject of religion from your mind, deny your reason, devote your thoughts to moral duties or dissipate them in the engagements of the world. Go then, and do your duty to your neighbor, be just, be kindly tempered, be hospitable, set a good example, uphold religion as good for society, pursue your business, or your profession, or your pleasure, eat and drink, read the news, visit your friends, build and furnish, plant and sow, buy and sell, plead debates, work for the world, settle your children, go home and die, but eschew religious inquiry, if you will not have faith, nor hope that you can have faith, if you will not join the Church." ("Discourses to Mixed Congregations," p. 283.)

In the next chapter, I purpose to give a general view of Infallibility, to say what it means, and what it is not.

## CHAPTER XI.

**General View of Infallibility : what it is, and what it is not.**

THE Catholic Rule of Faith, which I have endeavored to bring out clearly in the preceding chapters, is so reasonable in itself, and so admirably suited to develop Divine Faith, and sustain this supernatural virtue, that the wonder is, it does not at once commend itself to all thoughtful Christians. The Rule is simply this : we are to believe, without doubt or hesitation, whatever God asks us to believe ; and we learn what He wishes us to believe from the teaching of a living and speaking guide, which, by the ever-abiding assistance of the Holy Ghost, cannot lead us astray.

This plan at once settles all controversy ; is suited to all capacities, involves no long and laborious search, that might seriously interfere with the ordinary duties of life, and binds all who accept it in the bonds of the closest unity : why then is it rejected by non-Catholic Christians ?

There are many reasons, but the chief are, that it requires a belief in the supernatural ; and that it is directly opposed, not to reason, but to the pride of reason.

I mean, before I enter on the subject of the Infallibility of the Church, and the personal Infallibility of the Head of the Church on earth, each of which will form the subject of a distinct chapter, to examine these motives which chiefly influence the human mind in its rejection of Infallibility.

The belief in the presence of a supernatural guidance is the main difficulty. If men could be brought to believe that this is possible, it would be comparatively easy to calm down the irritation and resistance of pride.

Protestants say—"How by any possibility can weak, sinful, and erring mortals be miraculously led by the Spirit of God?"

The answer is obvious. God, if it pleases Him, may so enlighten them, that they cannot err. It might perhaps be argued, that such positive control would be destructive of human liberty; the man so enlightened could not sin. The privilege would involve something like the preposterous idea of Buddhism. Those gifted with Infallibility should be incarnations of the Deity.

Objections of this sort are almost too silly and irreverent to be answered seriously. Yet as such notions are rather insinuated, than urged, against Infallibility, by men in high positions, who are looked up to as profound authorities on these matters, it may be well to notice them.

I see, in the Introduction to "England and Christendom," that the late Dr. Pusey allowed himself to stoop to the low profanity of insinuating that Catholics believed, "that there was a quasi-hypostatic union of the Holy Ghost with each successive Pope—a sort of Llamaism."

I would only say, in reply to this monstrously absurd charge or insinuation, in the words of the learned Cardinal, "If any one can mistake 'assistance' for 'union,' it is to be feared that he must be unconsciously Nestorian." Most Christians know that Nestorius, condemned by the General Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, denied that the Divine Word was really made flesh in the womb of

the Virgin Mary. There was, he admitted, a sort of union of the Godhead with the manhood; but he denied that there was a hypostatic or personal union. It is most probable that theologians of Dr. Pusey's school may, if they admire the profaneness of their leader, quoted above, have just as foggy notions of the Incarnation, as they have of the Infallibility. As Cardinal Manning puts it, "It is to be feared that the hypostatic union of the second Person with our manhood amounts, in the minds of such theologians, to little more than the union of assistance." (Introduction, lxxxii.)

But probably the public would attach much more importance to the other part of the objection—that which supposes that constrained sinlessness is involved in the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let those who attach any weight to this difficulty remember that Caiphas, even at the time he was foremost in compassing the death of Christ, was, in virtue of his office as High-Priest, the living interpreter of God's law to the Jewish people, inspired and guided by the Holy Ghost. He told the Council, that "one man should die for the people." And St. John adds, "This he spoke not of himself: but being the High-Priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation" (John xi. 50, 51).

Balaam prophesied, yet he was not sinless at the time of his prophecy.

There is involved in the correct notion of infallibility, nothing like forced or constrained sanctity. The Pope is not regarded by any Catholic as different from other men in all that concerns free-will and the power of doing wrong, and sinning against his conscience. The Holy Father goes to confession, as any bishop, or priest, or other Catholic.



No doubt there are special graces attached to his position; as there are, according to the teaching of Catholic theology, to every office and charge to which God may call any individual. But personal sinlessness has nothing to do with Infallibility. Catholics venerate the Holy Father, and most joyfully pay him every mark of respectful homage which is due to his high office. But they pray for him, when it is the will of God to send him trials and persecution, just as did the early Christians when the first Pope, St. Peter, was in prison,—“Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church of God for him” (Acts xii. 5).

It never enters into their minds to make him a sort of Divine and sinless person. As Visible Head of the Church, he feeds “the lambs and sheep” of the one Fold; rules the whole flock; and by Divine appointment, guided by the Holy Ghost and assisted by this Holy Spirit, “confirms the Faith of his brethren.”

The objection has naturally led me to say this much here on the personal Infallibility; I will now return to the general subject.

The difficulties I have just noticed, are as nothing when compared to that which rises in the minds of non-Catholics, from the materialism of this age of steam and electric progress.

In the conceit generated by the quasi-annihilation of space and time, and the subjugation of the elements and the genii of mechanism of every shape and form to the will of man, there rises up a spirit that mocks the bare idea of anything supernatural. Whatever cannot be seen or felt or fashioned into shape, has no real existence in the minds of this busy generation that ignores the Church of God.

“There can be little doubt,” says Cardinal Manning, “that disbelief and exclusion of the supernatural in religion represents the mind and tendency of the majority of English laymen. The material habits of English society make it especially susceptible of a Christianity without mysteries, and a faith which is only coextensive with Naturalism.”

If belief in the supernatural had completely departed from the minds of non-Catholics it would be beyond all hope to make the least impression on the public mind, by even the strongest arguments, in favor of Infallibility. As well might you attempt to prove the fact of a miracle to one who had made up his mind that miracles are an impossibility. Perhaps it would not be so difficult to convince a man of ordinary intelligence, who was polite enough to listen to argument without flying into a passion, that he was parting with his common-sense when he stupidly made up his mind to reject human testimony vested with the necessary conditions, as a motive of certitude. He might be brought to see that a fact is a fact, whether it belongs to the course of things known to us by experience or not. And that, where there is sufficient testimony to establish the existence of a fact, the fact must not, however extraordinary it may seem, be handled too rudely; else consistent and logical reasoning will bring down in ruins the whole structure of human knowledge, and fill the mind with a desolating Pyrrhonism, destructive to the reception and growth of any seeds of useful information.

Probably under such pressure, the man who was accustomed to scoff at miracles, might satisfy himself with giving expression to the well-known quotation from Hamlet, about the strange things “never dreamt of in our

philosophy ;” and content himself with saying, “ Well, well—wonderful ! What strange things do sometimes happen in this world of ours !” and drop the subject without venturing to assail the point directly.

But when it comes to a dispute, not about an extraordinary fact, but about the whole system of the supernatural, and about the admission of this bugbear of modern thought into the serious consideration of men, as a practical factor in their estimate of things, the case is very different ; and one scarcely knows how to secure even polite attention to what he has to say about it.

Still, as I have intimated, belief in the action of the supernatural has not been quite relegated to the land of myths and shadows. There exists even yet, in most of the non-Catholic congregations or churches, a traditional belief in these “ things which appear not,” on which to build a substantial argument. “ Protestants still believe,” as Cardinal Manning says, “ in the Revelation of Christianity, in the inspiration of Scripture, in the Divine certainty of dogmatic tradition, in the Divine obligation of holding no communion with heresy and with schism” (“ England and Christendom,” p. 130), and though this refers mainly to the Anglo-Catholic body, there is perhaps a more lively faith in supernatural influence amongst Wesleyans and others, than in the Anglican Church itself.

Those who ground their faith, such as it is, on Pietistic notions, and believe in the subjective working of the Holy Spirit, in prayer, and in the sensible testimony of peace-giving assurances from the Lord and Life-giver ; and imagine that they see and feel the action of a kind and never-sleeping Providence in the ordinary affairs of life, all these must be open to reasoning derived from this supernatural source, or intimately connected with it.

And so, I have some hope, that what I have to say on the possibility of Divine and supernatural guidance ever existing in the Church, which is to teach all nations to the end of time, may not be absolutely profitless.

I would, however, set this point before the minds of even the most materialistic of my readers, a point touched upon in the fifth chapter of this book, that if there be evidence of one supernatural action on the minds of men, the whole argument, founded on the alleged impossibility of such action, at once collapses.

I pointed to one fact admitted by Christians, and held by them as the strongest support of Faith, the fact that there have been prophets, and that their prophecies, fulfilled in every detail, regarding contingent events, absolutely beyond the reach of human knowledge, proves beyond a doubt that the Spirit of God, which "breathes where it lists," can guide fallible men to infallible declarations. What is possible once, may be perpetuated; what it has pleased the spirit of truth to effect, not once but frequently in the past, for the welfare of mankind, may be repeated: and hence there is nothing conceivably impossible in the doctrine of Infallibility.

Once this point is established, men of good-will may reason calmly on the claim of the Catholic Church to this supernatural guidance.

I take then this ground: Our Divine Redeemer certainly could, if He so willed it, have provided those whom He commissioned to teach all nations His Divine Message, with such a gift as supernatural inerrancy; and have, by a special intervention of His Providence, secured them and their successors in the ministry to the consummation of the world, supernatural and infallible assistance.

Considering that it was His blessed will, and most earnest desire, that those who “through their preaching were to believe,” should be most closely united in the bonds of peace and charity; and that no means could, as far as human reason can judge, be more suited to produce this result; that any other means, such as individual inspiration of the members of the Church, and pious reading of the written Word, would have produced the very opposite effects—quarrels, divisions, and sects without number, it follows that he *ought*, as far as we can use such an expression in reference to God, to have adopted this means.

There can be no doubt that He promised this infallible guidance, in the pledge of His abiding presence with the teaching body, and by the assurance of the Paraclete or Comforter, to teach them all truth to the end of time. Therefore, I conclude, He did actually confer on the men legitimately called and appointed to this office this inestimable privilege.

The whole argument is summed up in the words of an eminent Christian Doctor of times long past—“*Promisit, potuit, dedit.*” “He promised it, He could fulfil his promise, and it was proper that He should; therefore He *did* actually give it.”

I maintain that there can be no more lucid argument than this, when it is viewed in itself. As I said before, I do not mean to pursue the argument to its application. I have no desire, in a work like this, to involve myself and my readers in the polemical dust raised by the conflicts of the last three hundred years. Those who side with the rebellion against the Divine authority of the Church, at the period of the so-called Reformation, may, if they cannot help it, as in truth they cannot, spend their



lives in this unprofitable labor of twisting and perverting history, to show that the clear promises of Christ did actually fail; and that the simple faithful, who, with the docility of children to a kind and bountiful father, trusted in these promises, were the victims of misplaced confidence; and that there is consequently nothing before earnest and anxious Christians, all through their lifetime, but harrowing doubts, perplexities, and misgivings.

I cannot join issue with this theory, and thus aid in keeping up this unprofitable and miserable strife. They who are bound by their false position to cling to it "like grim death" may, if it so pleases them, devote themselves to the never-ending work of critical analysis. Perhaps there may be something soothing in the process, for individuals whose conscience is troubled by the possibility of being allied to revolt against legitimate authority. But it can hardly interest the general public to wade through the wide expanse of these shallow waters, in search of some proof or other that our Divine Lord violated His solemn word, and that they are therefore justified in perpetuating the miseries of all uncharitableness.

I have made up my mind not to heed these arguments derived from prejudiced and hostile historians. It would be a mere waste of time. They who watch contemporary events, and see how facts are colored and distorted to make them suit the interests of a party or gratify malignant feelings, may know very well what reliance is to be placed on the stories of scandalous corruptions, and tyranny, and plotting and lying, and all the other abominations brought forward by the enemies of the Catholic Church from the testimony of her most bitter and determined opponents, in the old days, when the "*Odium*

*Theologicum*" poisoned the sources of Christian charity and maddened the fevered passions of those who hated the Spouse of Christ.

The study of these precious documents, filled in every page with rancorous abuse and slander, scarcely veiled with the flimsy web of Pharisaical righteousness, is too much for the tranquillity of soul in serious Christians, who earnestly desire, "as far as it is possible, and as much as is in them, to have peace with all men" (Rom. xii. 18). The angry spirit engendered by the analysis of these tales of burning hatred and fierce accusation, associated in the mind of the reader with scenes of maddening discord and bloody strife, is near akin to the blind zeal and unrestrained fury which once clamored for the crucifixion of our Divine Lord. Well did He prepare His Church for such assaults as these when He said to the first teachers of His gospel, "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Be glad in that day, and rejoice: for behold your reward is great in Heaven" (Luke vi. 22, 23).

One must often think of these consoling words, as weak human nature feels, in reading these calumnies, the lasting proof of the world's hatred towards the work of Christ. "If the world hate you, know ye that it hated Me before you" (John xv. 18). When these things take the place of sound argument, built on principles admitted by all men, it is much better, in the interests of charity, to let them be. The investigation of them disturbs one's own peace of mind; and whatever he may say in reply must necessarily outrage the despotic claims of free thought and private judgment. Hence I mean to keep strictly to the argument *a priori*, and to leave

the solution of historical difficulties to simple and unbounded confidence in the promises of Christ.

The other great reason which stands in the way of the acceptance of infallibility is what I call the pride of reason, or the supposed rights of individual judgment. Non-Catholics say, "God has given us reason, and we are bound, as reasonable beings, to exercise this priceless gift. It would be degrading to surrender it to any human authority. We will therefore judge for ourselves, and follow the course that seems to us best, whatever Priest or Bishop or Pope may say to the contrary. We are our own masters, and as long as we commit no offence against society, that will deservedly strip us of our liberty, we are determined to cling to this inalienable right."

But those who thus pride themselves on the free exercise of their judgment, are, unconsciously perhaps, yet nevertheless positively, if they adopt any religious profession, the real slaves of the fallible opinions of others. There is not one in a million who has the ability, or the time, or means of constructing a Philosophy of Religion, which he can honestly call his own.

As the brilliant Lacordaire expresses it,—"*L'homme est un être enseigné*"—"Man is a being who is taught;" and the learned Dominican regards this as an incontestable proposition. And if man has no other teacher but one who is fallible like himself, or a number of men associated under the formularies of a sect or Church which disclaims Divine authority, he subjects himself to a teaching that can give him no security against error. He, in other words, binds himself to accept, as the rule of his life and the ground of his hopes hereafter, what may be a lie.

This is the most degrading of all servitude; it is the chaining up of the soul and its noble faculties, at the

word of an irresponsible despot. If a tyrant, who had the power of enforcing his commands by the penalty of death, insisted that a helpless subject should accept the religious views which pleased himself, the subject, who had the spirit of a real man, should rather die than profess to believe any doctrine opposed to his convictions. If he died, in consequence of his resistance to this unjust law, he would be a martyr to the cause of real liberty. He might not be a martyr to the cause of *truth*, for if he preferred his own fallible view to that of his oppressor, he might be only deceiving himself, and giving up his life for a mere whim or caprice of his own, as false and worthless as that pressed upon him.

There can be no martyrs to truth but those who, like the millions who were faithful to the Church of Christ in the days of persecution, testified their fidelity by their blood. These trusted in the teaching of God, set before them by the Infallible Church.

Theirs was a "reasonable service;" and they are now happy forever with God, because they loved His blessed will above life itself. "If I should deliver up my body to be burned," says St. Paul, "and have not charity"—that is, the love of God above all things, and obedience to His law—"it will profit me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3).

Nevertheless, I say a man should rather die than basely yield his convictions, to accept, in place of them, what he believed was absolutely false.

And yet this is what non-Catholics are doing every day of their lives, without the pressure of any persecution. They may say that the creed they profess is their own free choice, but a brief examination would show them that there was no choice in the matter at all, and that they belonged to a particular denomination, chiefly be-

cause they were brought up in it, and *learned* from the teaching of parents and ministers all that they believe.

If private judgment mean anything real, those who cling to it in opposition to the Church of God, are sacrificing their own convictions to the teaching of a fallible and uncertain authority.

It is as plain as that no two blades of grass are alike, that no two men, free to judge and choose for themselves, will be alike in all the objects of their choice. They will have their own views on religion as well as on any other subject; and unless they are false to their profession of faith and loyalty in the creed of their particular sect, they must give up altogether their own religious notions, much as they may talk in praise of liberty, they are the slaves—the voluntary slaves of dogmatic error.

They may say they differ with their parson, or with the conditions and formularies of their particular denomination; but unless they have the courage of their convictions and set up a religion for themselves, they do not really enjoy this boasted liberty of private judgment.

The Christian world, outside the Catholic Church, broken up and divided as it is, would be ten thousand times more divided, in fact it would necessarily become a very Babel of confusion, if individuals were faithful to their imaginary rights, and believed just as they thought fit.

It is folly to say that they agree with those of their own communion in fundamental points and all essentials, for who has a right to make such distinctions in matters of Revealed Religion? Whatever is contained in the written Word of God must be considered of supreme importance, by those especially who consider the inspired Scriptures to be their only Rule of Faith.



It is a veritable sham—this assertion of private judgment, unless a man stand alone, and become, as Paine taught, “his own church and his own minister.”

Suppose any man, who really has an opinion of his own on religious matters, worth calling an opinion, one that he has worked up from his own interior consciousness, and by really thinking for himself, and that this opinion is singular or peculiar, will he dare assert it openly?

Suppose again that, acting bravely and consistently, as becomes one who glories in this liberty of thought, he takes the first favorable opportunity of declaring it in public; he will soon find that he must either hold his peace or cease to be a member of the sect from which he has dared to differ. There have been cases in the Cape Colony familiar to every colonist, as there are cases, all the world over, where even learned and able ministers have been virtually excommunicated, because they presumed to think for themselves. If they were not rudely expelled, they were told pretty plainly that they had no right to eat the bread of the brethren, who considered they were strictly bound to conform to the prescribed articles of the sect.

I say so much on this point to make it clear, that the prejudice which intellectual pride forms to itself, can be no real barrier to the acceptance of the Infallible Rule of Faith of the Catholic Church.

The position of the Church is clear and unmistakable. She obliges all her children to be *unius labii*, “of one mouth,” and one profession, not because her creeds or her formularies are the compilation of the ablest scholars and the most learned men to be found in the world; but because the inspired and infallible Church declares them

to be the sure and certain meaning of what God has revealed to us.

She does not say, "Believe me, because I am instructed by the experience of eighteen hundred years; because the long list of Saints were my children; because the most learned in every age have illustrated my teaching; or for the sake of the memories of the glorious past; or on account of the great names who have defended my doctrines; or on account of the millions of martyrs, who have, in my service, confronted the tyrants of this World."

But she says now, as she ever did, even in the first days of her existence, "Believe my word, for it is most infallibly and beyond all doubt, the very Word of God Himself: and 'if an Angel from Heaven were to preach to you any other Gospel, let him be anathema' (Gal. i. 8). Hear my Voice, and keep my word, or take the fate of the sensuous heathen and the reprobate."

The Catholic Church does not teach her children that they may pick and choose for themselves out of the doctrines she sets before them by Divine Commission; but she speaks "as one having authority," and she says, "If you reject one article of this everlasting Gospel, you will become guilty of all; you will, by a deliberate act of this kind, shatter in your soul the very foundation of Divine Faith; for every tittle of this doctrine rests equally on the Infallible Word of God, which I infallibly announce to you."

Surely there can be nothing unworthy of man in obeying the command of his sovereign Lord and Master, his Creator and His Judge. But who does not see that nothing can be more degrading to man's true liberty and self-respect than to be bound irrevocably to the uncertain and doubtful teaching of fallible men.

Infallibility is not, as has been so often falsely and foolishly asserted, the enslavement of our reason and common-sense. The Church, in her definitions, does not go beyond the "Deposit of the Faith," once for all confided to her keeping. She never dreams of entering as an infallible teacher upon the domain of secular knowledge, or defining doctrine as a matter of Divine Faith on any subjects not revealed, that are within the reach of the human intellect.

Here we need no infallible guide to direct our steps: if we err in matters of this kind, we can be corrected by the learning and experience of others.

She explains only and develops, according to the wants of her children, what is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not."

Here only, where no human learning or experience could help us in the least, she is our faithful guide and teacher; ever ready to warn where there is danger of error; ever, like the wise householder, bringing out of the vast treasury of the knowledge wherewith the Holy Ghost inspires her,—“new things and old.” If she requires our entire and undoubting consent to mysteries that are above our comprehension, it is only because she, with infallible certainty, teaches us the correct meaning of the Divine message.

“Believe these things,” she says, “though you cannot understand them. Honor God by your confiding trust. Accept them without doubt or hesitation, because they are the truths which the Infinite has been pleased to tell us about that Divine nature, which must be beyond the reach of all human knowledge or comprehension.

In the next chapter I will deal more definitely with this important question of Infallibility.

## CHAPTER XII.

## The Infallibility of the Catholic Church.

WHEN I said, in the last chapter, that the existence of an Infallible guide is the simplest, and most direct means of securing unity in the believing body, I did not forget the clever argument of the late Dr. Whately on the subject. It amounts to this—that when disputes first arose amongst Christians, in the very days of the Apostles, it was seen and felt by the teachers that there was necessity for some tribunal that would pronounce with authority, and determine the true doctrine; that this feeling created a disposition to find in Scripture, some foundation for the existence of such a tribunal; and that in this way, the texts on which Catholics mainly rely for proof of Infallibility in the teaching Church, or as it is called by schoolmen, *active* Infallibility, were brought forward to support the imaginary and desirable claim.

This is indeed an ingenious, but not a satisfactory way, of accounting for the belief of the whole Catholic world in the Infallibility of the Church.

If an authority gifted with the power of silencing disputes, and definitely settling them by its *fat*, were, as the learned Archbishop contended, the fatal enemy of anything like gospel truth, and there was a strong tendency in human nature, or as he puts it—"a craving after" such dogmatic ruling, we should no doubt have been warned against it in the sacred Scriptures.

But the testimony of Scripture is all the other way.

In the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the future Church, she is represented to us, as ruling with a strong hand, ever protected by God, and ever triumphant over all her enemies.

In the New Testament, we are assured that the powers of Hell shall never prevail against her, and that the Spirit of God would be always with her. This rather jars with the notion that true Christians were to be left entirely to their own interpretations of the written Word, and were, according to the intention of the Divine Founder of the Church, to spend their lives "in searching the Scriptures," and disputing with one another about their true meaning.

I mention this theory in the commencement of the chapter, for with most of our separated brethren it seems a foregone conclusion, that the Church, as Catholics understand it, was an abnormal growth, something that had its origin in the notions and prejudices and fancies of mankind; when they had not the opportunities they now enjoy of reading the Bible, and judging for themselves.

If one would try to picture to himself the state of things in the early days of Christianity, as Bible-readers who hold to the all-sufficiency of Scripture love to imagine it, it would assume something of this form. Every little group or family of believers had a copy of the sacred text to itself, and spent its days in hunting up fragmentary particles of sound doctrine; and when occasions, as the Lord's Day, came round, it associated with other groups, and then, without control or order, each head of a family retailed its own experiences, then all joined in a happy prayer-meeting and in a hymn of praise.

When I hear that passage of the Acts of the Apostles,



xvii., 11th verse, quoted so constantly and with such entire satisfaction, as if the noble Bereans, who “were daily searching the Scriptures,” were the only right Christians, and hear, as I have often heard, the mocking sneer of constant Bible-readers, at the bare mention of the teaching Church, I must come to the conclusion that, in the ideas of these enlightened Christians, the sketch I have just given is the one that is ever before them.

It rather damages the pretty picture, however, when the stern fact is demonstrated, that there was no Bible then but the Old Testament; and that the Jews of Berea were commended, above their countrymen of Thessalonica, because, instead of persecuting the Apostles, like these latter, they examined the prophecies and other texts quoted by the Apostles, in support of their right to teach and preach, as they were commanded by Christ.

Dr. Whately does not much repair the damage done to his interesting theory, when he founds an argument on St. Paul’s address to the ancients of the Churches of Miletus and Ephesus, mentioned in the 20th chapter of the Acts, including the passage—“Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts xx. 28).

There is something very like ruling and governing here; and Divine authority, and the immediate action of the Holy Ghost, which favor much more the Catholic idea of a Church, than this popular notion derived from the example of the Bereans.

Of course, Dr. Whately does not quote the address of St. Paul to the ancients, for the purpose of proving that the Apostles taught with Divine authority, but, on the contrary, to show that when St. Paul warned them against

“the ravening wolves,” he said nothing about Infallibility.

If the Apostle did not use the word, he certainly implied all that is signified by it. If the Holy Ghost had placed these Bishops “to *rule* the Church,” He would, as our Divine Lord had promised, in some way or other guide them also. And the people, who were to be taught by this Divine authority, could fully realize to themselves that, if they followed their own favorite opinions on the doctrines of Christ, and despised and contemned the Bishops, they were not, by this conduct, simply despising men alone, but Him, Who sent them, and commissioned them to teach.

As long as non-Catholics run away with these fanciful ideas of the nature of a Church, or the total absence of a teaching body, it is of course useless to say anything to them about Infallibility. They will hold to their own Pietist theory, that everything necessary to Faith is contained in the written Word; and that the Holy Ghost gives every individual who searches the Scriptures, the meaning and sense that will profit him to salvation.

I can easily imagine people of this school of thought losing temper when their pretty baby-house is knocked to pieces, and saying hotly to me—“Is not the Bible the Word of God? Don’t you admit this yourself? And therefore, if we read it, what do we want with a teaching Church, or any nonsense of the kind? Why should men come between us and our God? We can learn from the Holy Book our religion, just as well as any Church could teach it to us.”

It would scarcely improve their “frame of mind,” if I went on to show them that there are many things “hard to be understood” in the Bible, and that the divisions of Christendom, and the dissensions of Christians, are all

traceable to this belief in individual guidance by the Holy Spirit ; and that all are bound “to hear the Church” and obey those whom Christ sent to teach them, as they should obey Himself ; and that if they merely took out of the Bible what pleases their own fancy, they destroy, in their own regard, the very foundation of all certain Faith.

I will not therefore dwell upon these sore points, but try briefly and clearly to show what is meant by the Infallibility of the Catholic Church. When I have explained this point, I will answer some of the most popular objections to it.

As I have already intimated, a distinction is made by the schoolmen between active and passive Infallibility. The latter, which regards the whole body of the Faithful, the teaching as well as the taught, means that the multitude of believers can never be deceived, in the object of their belief ; they can never believe with Faith anything purporting to be revealed, which has not been actually revealed. Active Infallibility regards specially the teaching Church ; and means that they who succeed the Apostles, as teachers of religion, can never lead astray those who accept and follow their teaching.

Passive Infallibility is, in some shape or form, admitted by almost every denomination of Christians.

The Greek Church holds to it, as one of the strongest and most immutable points of Faith. Anglicans, notwithstanding the article which declares that particular Churches have erred, will hardly believe that the entire Church, visible and invisible, trunk and branch, could fall into error. Wesleyans, and those who believe in the individual guidance of the Holy Spirit, scarcely admit that earnest and sincere Christians, who invoke this light, can be deceived.

When it comes to the teaching body, or active Infallibility, the difference between Catholics, and those who profess to be guided by their own individual judgment of Scripture, or by some human formularies, is marked and decisive.

In the first place, there is not in other communions a well-recognized and acknowledged teaching body at all. I mean of course a living, speaking judge and interpreter of doubts and difficulties, and disputes and controversies.

In the Greek Church, for instance, the pagan principle of blending the spiritual and temporal power in the person of the Emperor, making him "*Imperator et Pontifex Maximus*,"—Emperor and High Priest,—which developed itself more fully after the schism of Photus, in the ninth century, produced a state of lifelessness as regards dogmatic teaching. Beyond their heresy of the procession of the Holy Ghost, they did not add to the crime of schism, that of inventing and teaching new doctrines, or venturing on the development of doctrines already received. Many as have been the efforts made to draw the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Oriental Bishops in communion with him, to unite with the Anglican Church, they have sturdily resisted such invitations. They cling still to the belief in the seven Sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Real Presence, the honor to be paid to the Holy Mother of God, Purgatory and prayers for the dead, and other doctrines, which, by the articles of the Church of England, are excluded from the creeds and formularies of Anglican belief. "Immobility and superstitious attachment to exterior forms" are, according to the article in Goschler on this subject, "the chief characteristics of the Greek and Oriental Church." Since the erection of the Russian Patriarchate in 1589, and the in-

stitution of the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg in 1721, learned Greek ecclesiastics would be rather shy of appealing to the mother Church of Constantinople, for dogmatic declarations concerning either Faith or Discipline.

As regards the Anglican Church, though I do not wish to say one disrespectful word of this distinguished body of Christians, taking it with all its variations and divergencies of belief, from Anglo-Catholicism to extreme Latitudinarianism, I really do not know, nor can I find out by careful study, where the seat of authoritative teaching is fixed.

Some say in the Archbishop of Canterbury; others in the Privy Council; some in the Convocation of Bishops and clergy; others in individual Bishops. And some High-Church clergymen, without the Episcopal dignity, maintain that it is fixed in their individual selves.

The last view has been particularly noted by the chief organs of public opinion, in the fierce conflicts between "priests," as they call themselves, and their recognized Bishops, on matters connected with Ritual. At any rate, though each particular party, whether it be called "High" or "Low," "Broad" or "Narrow," may imagine it sees distinctly the Headship, and the "*Magisterium*," and the defining power where it lists, the public generally, and Christians who are not initiated into the mysteries of Anglican belief, fail to see where it actually resides.

The other Christian bodies make no pretension to any dogmatic teaching, save what is contained in their constitutions and formularies. These of course being human in their origin, and therefore liable to error, can scarcely, even if they sufficiently explain themselves, be supposed to bind in conscience. No doubt they bind, as regards the privilege of Church membership. Any clergyman



who, under the influence of what he might believe to be the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would attempt to exercise in public his supposed liberty of individual judgment, and "hold forth" in opposition to any doctrine laid down in the formularies, would soon find that he was making a grave mistake.

But of course neither Rules, nor Constitutions, nor formularies, nor articles constitute what I am writing about,—a living, speaking, and supreme teaching body, who as "having authority" from God, and guided by the Holy Ghost, is recognized as holding the place of those teachers, to whom our Divine Lord said—"He that heareth you heareth Me."

In the Catholic Church, the teaching body, believed to be vested with this Divine authority, is manifest to every one. The Bishops with the Pope at their head are recognized by Catholics, all the world over, as the successors of the Apostolic College.

And here, to prevent any ambiguity about the expression the Church and the Catholic Church, arising from the determined effort of High-Church clergymen in educating their people to claim for themselves this enviable title of Catholic, I may as well say once for all, that when I use the expression "the Catholic Church," I mean the Church so easily recognized by the two notes applied to it by St. Augustine in the fourth century—"The Church spread throughout the world, and united to the See of Peter" (St. Aug. opp., tom. ii. pp. 119, 120).

These two notes are incommunicable; and determine the exact meaning of St. Augustine's words, when he says that the name Catholic belongs exclusively to that Church which, "in the midst of heresies," has so held

possession of it, that no other dare reasonably claim it (St. Augustine, tom. vi., Contra. Ep. Fund. cap. 4).

Now, by the active Infallibility of the Catholic Church, I mean its supernatural prerogative of testifying the true Faith always; of teaching and judging, without danger of error, all points relating to this true Faith.

I do not mean to *prove* here that the Catholic Church actually enjoys this great prerogative. My object, in this book, is more to explain the Catholic Rule of Faith, and to show what it is, and what it is not; and as this Rule of Faith rests mainly on the Infallibility of the teaching Church, to make it clear to every one, who cares to read this book, what is meant by this Infallibility.

I will leave what is called Papal Infallibility for the next chapter.

The teaching body in the Catholic Church consists of the Bishops, either gathered together in council, and so deciding a question by their vote, and the confirmation of the Holy See; or scattered throughout the world, giving in their adhesion to a certain doctrine. The Bishops are the lawful inheritors of the privilege conferred on the Apostolic college, of guiding, defining, and teaching, by the supernatural assistance of the Holy Ghost; and consequently, without fear of error, all those things which Christ commanded the Apostles to teach.

By the universal assent of the Church, Bishops are in this position; by the constant practice of the Church, they alone have a right to sit, as judges in council, where doctrine is to be defined or explained.

Individual Bishops may err; but a council, convoked by the visible Head of the Church, the Pope, who is himself a Bishop, and the Head over all the rest, and consisting of such a number as may be fairly said to represent

the Church, according to the estimate of the Church, summoned from all parts of the world, for the purpose of holding a council, and presided over by the Pope or his representatives—such a council, judging the questions regarding revealed truth submitted to it, and deciding them by its vote, and having this vote confirmed by the Pope, is, by the supernatural guidance of the Holy Ghost, free from all danger of error; and constitutes what is ordinarily called the Infallible tribunal of the Church.

The Faithful may receive such a decision with the same confidence, in its exact truth, as if they heard it from the lips of Christ Himself.

Let it not be imagined for a moment, that the Bishops of the Church, either in council or dispersed, are always reviewing the Deposit of the Faith, or the body of truths confided to the teaching of the Apostles.

The great body of revealed truth, nearly every article of the Catholic creed, has been defined ages ago. Certain rules were laid down for the guidance of the Faithful, even in the times when the Apostles met together, and declared that “it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them,” so to determine (Acts xv. 28).

It is only when there are very grave disputes about the meaning of certain revealed doctrines, and the Faithful are much disturbed and anxious, or that some serious changes have to be effected in the Canon law, or discipline of the Church, that these great assemblies are held.

I will show, in the next chapter, how the Church is armed to overcome error or improve discipline, when the errors or the danger threatened, do not seem to the Holy Father to require the tremendous effect given to His simple decree, by the voice of hundreds of Bishops assembled in council.

Now, when it is clearly understood that the subject of the decrees either of councils or Popes is confined to revealed doctrines, and to things connected with Faith and Morality; and that no council or Pope decides a question without carefully inquiring into the teaching of the Church in former ages, on up to the very beginning, or as far as the doctrine is clearly marked in its development, and that, for this purpose, the decisions of previous councils, and the testimony of the most holy and learned writers of these past ages, are patiently examined, it must be evident to any non-Catholics who will use their common-sense, that the Infallibility of the Church is not the dreadful thing it is often represented to be by the bigoted enemies of Catholicity.

They might even be disposed to admit, that if all these precautions were taken, in order to obtain the correct meaning of a passage of Scripture, or for having a dogma of Faith determined, those who accepted such decision might rest perfectly satisfied that it was morally certain to be right. Apart even from any supernatural guidance, there would be, at least, all the certainty that men can have by natural means, afforded by such careful and patient investigation.

It all comes to this, by the appointment and in accordance with the plan of Christ, and fortified by the realization of His promises of supernatural assistance, that the Catholic Church can never accept error for truth in religion; and that the teaching body can never deceive those who have been commanded by our Divine Lord "to hear the Church."

As I said before, more than once, I am not going to enter into the historical view of the question, involved in the Article of the Church of England—"Councils have

erred." There is *prima facie* evidence that they could not err, unless on the supposition that Christ made a false promise. There is equally clear evidence, that all who rebelled against the Divine Authority of the Church, at the time of the Reformation, or who have since, by their own mature judgment, abetted that rebellion, are bound to maintain, that the Church founded by Christ did actually so err. For otherwise they could not have even the semblance of any ground to stand on.

"The old Church must, somehow or other, have got rid of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and gone astray in her Faith, or we cannot, without grievous crime, be where we are, in direct antagonism with it"—is all that Protestants can say, when they seriously consider their religious position.

Perhaps, seeing the magnitude of the interests involved, I may be allowed to put this position distinctly before them. I will use the words of Cardinal Manning for this purpose. The case as put by His Eminence is truly appalling for those who only *think* that they are safe, and who try to believe it to be their duty to abuse the oldest Church in Christendom. As His Eminence says,—“If the Church spread throughout the world and united to the Chair of Peter be the true Church, the corollaries of this fact are severe, peremptory, and inevitable.” “For,” he continues, “if the Catholic Faith be the perfect revelation of Christianity, the Anglican Reformation is a cloud of heresies; if the Catholic Church be the organ of the Holy Ghost, the Anglican Church is not only no part of the Church, but no Church of Divine foundation. It is a human institution, sustained, as it was founded, by a human authority, without priesthood, without sacraments, without absolution, without the Real



Presence of Jesus upon its altars." ("England and Christendom," page 129.)

And if this be the position of Anglicanism at its best, from a Catholic point of view, or in that form which is known under the name Anglo-Catholicism, where learning, patient study, unmistakable earnestness, and blamelessness of life are gathered together as in a focus, and outshine, by their combined brightness, the poor lights of the scorn and ridicule of an unbelieving world,—what is the position of those whose main hope of obtaining Heaven seems, from the intense earnestness with which it is cultivated, to be hatred of Popery, and everything connected with it?

The time, I believe, has come when what an American writer aptly calls "the frozen truth" must be laid before the public.

We Catholics have borne patiently every reproach that could be flung at the worst forms of idolatry and blasphemy. That does not matter much; for the enemies of our Divine Lord, who were zealous for the law, and the letter of Scripture, and the scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, and the inflexibility of human traditions, abused Him far more foully, than the "Saints" of the new Law abuse the children of the Church.

But when one sees that the really honest and straightforward, who want to serve God in all earnestness, are being driven into the arms of unbelief, by the unreality of sentimental cant, and the natural horror of hypocrisy, he feels that the time is come when, if he would escape the wrath denounced on "blind watchmen and dumb dogs not able to bark, seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams" (Isaias lvi. 10), he must speak out, and say to the public what he believes in his heart, and before God,

to be "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

I know well that this is an invidious task; and that what I am writing may wound long-cherished prejudices, irritate imaginary righteousness, and excite against myself, not indeed hatred, for I suppose a Bishop of the "Church of Antichrist" will be, as more nearly related by his office to this arch-enemy of our Divine Lord, thought deserving only of ridicule, contempt, and scorn. But this does not matter much, if I please God in the honest discharge of my duty: and I will trust to Him for forgiveness if, by awakening such feelings, I have unwittingly transgressed the blessed law of Charity.

I now come to the objections—not the objections founded on supposed historical evidence against the Infallibility, but those which are popularly believed to upheave the principle itself.

And, first, I notice the old argument, so well known to every tyro in theology. "Infallibility," say our opponents, "rests altogether on that fallacy called in logic a "vicious circle." "You Catholics," they say, "prove this point by the testimony of the Inspired Scriptures; and then you prove the Inspiration of the Scriptures by the Infallibility of the Church."

The answer is so plain that the wonder is, how this objection has not been long ago relegated to the region of mists and shadows.

If I am arguing with Protestants, who believe in the inspiration of Scripture, I say: "Look to these sacred Scriptures, where you think to have life everlasting" (John v. 39), and there you will see clearly and distinctly laid down the proofs of what I claim for the teaching Church and for the whole body of the Faithful. "Un-

less you will hear the Church," you class yourself with reprobates (Matt. xviii. 17). St. Paul, speaking for himself and his fellow-laborers in the work of teaching, says: "We are therefore ambassadors for Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us" (2 Cor. v. 20). So that they who hear the Apostles, and those who inherit their office, hear Him (Luke x. 16). Christ promises His lawfully appointed teachers, to the end of time, His guidance and assistance (Matt. xxviii. 20). He promises them, moreover, the Spirit of Truth to abide with them always (John xiv. 16, 26). If He is faithful to the promises, it is inconceivable how the teaching Church can deceive those who hear it. If the Jews were bound to receive the word of Christ and His Apostles without doubt or questioning, it is hard to see why Christians should not. There is evidently no "vicious circle" here.

If I am addressing unbelievers, I point to the Scriptures simply as authentic records, like any other history, and I say, read there what Christ promised, and mark the fulfilment of these promises, in the establishment of the Church, by the preaching of the poor ignorant fishermen.

See how these men, without learning or any footing in society, changed the face of the world; note how, "by the foolishness of their preaching," they overcame the power of pagan philosophy, and the might of pagan immorality; see how they subdued, with the same facility, the fierce opposition of barbarism; mark the sanctity of the lives of those who overcame all opposition by their martyrdom. These things are as well to be found in profane history, as in the Scriptures. A wonderful revolution, such as no mere human power could possibly effect, was effected just as Christ predicted.

His work was therefore Divine; and consequently you can believe in His plain and explicit promises.

Then, probably, our Christian friends will object—“But your Church never, in the beginning, said anything about Infallibility; and the doctrine is not laid down as a matter in which Catholics should believe.”

I say, granted; but the teaching Church *acted* as if she fully believed she was endowed with inerrancy of teaching. The teaching body said to those who opposed their doctrine, “Anathema,” just as St. Paul pronounced an anathema even against an angel, if this Spirit from above presumed to teach any other Gospel.

There was no necessity, in the ages of Faith, to define what every Christian knew. It was only when men became full of their own conceits about their private judgment, and their superior knowledge, that the Church was obliged to speak out plainly.

The Council of the Vatican has settled this point, not, indeed, to the gratification, but rather to the savage indignation, of the philosophers of the nineteenth century.

“But your Infallibility is after all built on rationalism, or founded on reason. In the Catholic Church, as well as in any other Church, you must go back to the same starting-point; and how can that be infallible in the conclusion which is confessedly fallible in the premises?”

The answer is brief, plain, and simple enough to be caught at once. Reason does its part as far as reason can go: it leads us, as it were, to the feet of God, by the motives of credibility which it furnishes, and then God Himself speaks through His appointed guides. The supernatural accomplishes what is beyond the power of the natural man however highly gifted. Thus “Faith,” Divine supernatural Faith which excludes all doubt,

“cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ” (Rom. x. 17).

“But this Infallible guide is inaccessible. How are we to go to Rome, in order to learn our Faith, and to know what we are to believe, when we are perplexed?”

I answer, you need not go to Rome: any priest can teach you. Nay, more: any authorized penny Catechism will tell you plainly what the true doctrine is. If you do not understand what has been written to suit the comprehension of children, ask the nearest priest and he will explain it to you.

“But this priest may deceive me. He is, as regards me, precisely in the position of a Protestant minister towards those who look to him for instruction.”

By no means: the priest is in a different position altogether. He teaches, not what he judges is the meaning of the Word of God, nor what he finds laid down in fallible human formularies, but what he has learned from the Infallible Church. You can safely trust him and have faith in his word. No priest, however ignorant, will dare to teach you anything different from what every Catholic child and every layman knows.

There are indeed certain points connected with the false and deceitful teaching of crafty men, who will not hear the Church; and to understand these clearly would require some acquaintance at least with the elements of theology. But these questions do not concern men of good will; and should they ever present themselves as difficulties and perplexities in the way of a fairly-instructed and earnest Catholic, his Catholic instincts, I may say, will guide him safely. The whole body of Catholic doctrine is so knit together, and one dogma so naturally, one might almost say, springs from another, that the good



Catholic feels at once that there is a jarring and confusion whenever a heretical notion creeps into his mind.

The priest or the Catechism will tell you all about the unity and trinity of God, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of the Saviour, about the eternity of bliss hereafter, and "the everlasting fire;" about the Real Presence, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the seven Sacraments, and Purgatory, and all the other articles of Catholic Faith.

If you can imagine to yourself a priest either so stupid or so wicked as to try to lead you astray, you have only to tell some Catholic neighbor your suspicions, and if you satisfy him that the priest told you, for example, that there was no Hell or no Purgatory, or that Christ was not really present in the Blessed Sacrament, you would soon hear such a rumpus as would astonish you. You would quickly understand, by the immediate appearance of the Bishop on the scene, that not only the teaching body in the Catholic Church cannot err, but that the whole Church, even the little ones of Christ, are by the traditions of the Faith perfectly secure from error.

It is useless to dwell further on these and similar objections. The Infallibility of the Church is a fact, not only momentous, but intimately known to every Catholic who is worthy of the name.

I cannot better conclude this chapter than with the promise of God for this perpetual guidance of the Church, so consoling to every Catholic heart, given in the inspired words of Isaias :

"This is my covenant with them" (those who shall live after the days of the promised Redeemer and keep His word). "Saith the Lord : My spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put into thy mouth, shall not de-

part out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Isaias lix. 21).

In the next chapter, I will briefly explain what is meant by Papal Infallibility.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## Infallibility of the Pope.

BEFORE I enter upon this most interesting and much controverted question, I wish to say again, that I do not undertake to prove the point, or to establish it on historical grounds in this book: but merely to explain, in a way suited to the reading of the general public, what it means.

I think it will not be difficult, once the Infallibility of the Church is fairly understood, to show, on purely logical reasoning, that the Infallibility of the living Head of the Church on earth is a necessary consequence of the Infallibility of the living body, whether teaching or taught. The proofs of the doctrine would, even in the most abridged form, occupy an entire treatise; and the historical aspects of the question would fill several volumes. Still I hope to be able, even in the limits of one chapter, to establish the principles which will enable ingenuous and unprejudiced readers, to see how ordinary objections, founded either on reason or Church history, such as are trusted in by the opponents of the Catholic Church, may be answered in a satisfactory manner.

It will be the simplest way to lay down at once the Definition of Papal Infallibility, as pronounced by the Vatican Council.

The following is the decree: "We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: That the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*,—that is, when, in

the discharge of his office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolical authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals, to be held by the Universal Church,—is, by the Divine assistance promised him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that Infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that the Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, irreformable.”

There are many arguments derived from the position given by our Divine Lord to St. Peter amongst his colleagues in the Apostleship, of any of which the Infallibility of his successors might be rendered clearly intelligible.

Thus, according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, and to the admission of the most strenuous opponents of Papal Infallibility, holding that the whole Church cannot err, the successors of St. Peter form, like the Apostle himself, the centre of Unity in the Church. All Catholics admit this, and have ever admitted it; and no party amongst them ever called it into question.

And as Catholic Unity rests on the visible unity of Faith, or the oneness of the visible external profession made by believers, the Pope is the centre of the external profession of the Catholic Faith.

If, under any circumstances, the Pope could fall into error in his external profession of the Faith, the foundation of Unity in the Church would necessarily fail, and the perfect oneness of the Church which Christ established in her, on the model of the Holy Trinity, would be broken.

In the same way, an argument may be derived from the supremacy of St. Peter over the other Apostles. By the clear teaching of the sacred Scriptures, and the unanimous testimony of Catholic tradition, St. Peter was "to feed the lambs and sheep" (John xxi. 17). There is no use in heaping together texts, to prove a point on which there was never any doubt in the Catholic Church. He was to rule and govern, "to hold the keys," the emblem of supreme power (Matt. xvi. 19), and thus to be, as supreme Ruler, a principle of unity. Hence Christ rested the unity on the supremacy of the chief of the Apostles, and his successors; and therefore the visible unity of the Church and the Papal supremacy are not two distinct things, but different aspects of one and the same thing.

If this be so, it clearly follows that the same power must be found in each; and that a central authority, which was to be a bond of union, by the perfect oneness of the external profession of Faith made under and through that ruling power, could not be a fallible authority.

St. Peter too was constituted the foundation, against which the powers of Hell should never prevail (Matt. xvi. 18). He was to fulfil a function in the Church identical with that of the foundation of a building. The stability of the building depends mainly on the stability of the foundation. If the foundation gives way, the house must fall. Therefore Peter was to be the Rock of the Faith, and could never fail, even under the most violent assaults of error, figured by "the gates of Hell," to teach the one true Faith committed to his trust for all ages, even to the consummation of the world.

I merely call attention to these arguments, in passing. I do not mean to dwell on them and develop them.



But as I said, in the beginning, that the Infallibility of the living Head is intimately and necessarily involved in the Infallibility of the living body; and as the preceding chapter fully explained the latter point, it will be much more simple to show how, naturally and logically, Papal Infallibility arises from the Infallibility of the Church.

Starting from the point generally admitted by all Christians, that the whole Church of Christ cannot, in accordance with the plain and positive promises of its Divine Founder, fall into the deplorable position of accepting for the revealed truth, manifest error and doctrine absolutely false, I maintain that, if the living Head of the Church could, in the exercise of his office as universal teacher, propose false doctrines to be believed by the Faithful "spread throughout the world and united to the Holy See," then the whole Church would be bound to believe a lie.

This is clear, if we keep to the essential elements of the figure under which the living Church is represented to us in the sacred Scriptures, and the writings of the early Fathers. The successor of St. Peter is the "Head and mouth-piece" of the living organism. By no straining of the imagination can we picture to ourselves a speaking head cut off, and in conflict with the headless body. The bare supposition of such a monstrosity is directly opposed to a common-sense view of a teaching Church.

The main efforts of Gallicanism or of the national Church of France, insidiously formed and nurtured, by a Court which had not the courage of the Tudor family in England, to separate, by a daring blow, a nation from the Fold of Christ, were directed to place the Holy Father in a state of isolation from the teaching body.

But even the vast learning and attractive eloquence of Bossuet miserably failed in attempting to give life and energy to a creation so anomalous.

His distinction between the Chair of Peter and the person who sat therein, is a blemish which even the most ardent admirers of "the Eagle of Meaux" can never efface. He tried, in opposition, it is feared, to his own convictions, to maintain this absurd distinction.

The promise of Christ to Peter and to his successors, he argued, adhered to the Chair of Peter, and could never be broken. A link or two in the chain which bound the chief of the Apostles and his successors might, he said, fail, or seem to fail, in an unworthy Pope ; but the succession would, sooner or later, repair the damage, and secure the integrity of the promises.

A child of ordinary capacity might see that a supposition of this kind must be fatal to the Divine pledge of perpetual assistance. A chain that might be so easily broken, and might continue unrepaired for an indefinite time, could never be relied upon to secure the bark of Peter from the violence of the tempests which, according to our Divine Lord, were to assail it ever and again, through all generations, either through the malevolence of the powers of Hell, or the hatred of the unbelieving world.

It should be clearly understood, that neither Bossuet, nor any of the court party who rallied round him, ever doubted for a moment the Infallibility of the teaching Church. They only sought, through a dangerous compromise, to secure the rights of the Church, fiercely threatened and assailed by the ambition of the civil power. But like all compromises where sound principle is involved, they neither satisfied the State nor saved the Gallican Church from the scourge of errors, the effects of

which have been barely repaired in the present generation.

Jansenism, with its insidious poison, the most dangerous that ever infected the vigorous life of the Church, has shown even unbelievers, in the wide spread of revolutionary principles, how difficult it is to arrest the growth of these germs of moral pestilence, which are secretly hatched and abundantly diffused, when the vigilant care of the Watchman, divinely appointed to guard the spiritual health of nations, has been rudely interfered with. Maret and "Janus" and their following, who left nothing undone that wily cunning, stimulated by offended pride of intellect, could suggest to mar the proceedings of the Vatican Council, well knew how to profit, in their unholy efforts, by the unsound principles which were involved in the Gallican articles of 1682.

The arguments of these clever but misguided men were mainly directed to place the Holy Father in a position of hostility to the rest of the teaching body, which they strove to imagine could be sound and healthy and capable of performing all its functions, even when a headless and consequently a lifeless trunk. Hence we hear so much of the ambition of the late supreme Pontiff, and the fatal blow which they would fain persuade the Catholic world has been inflicted on the judicial functions of the Episcopate by the Definition of Papal Infallibility.

The arguments employed by them are so insidious, and at the same time, when they are properly understood, they bring out so clearly what is meant by the personal Infallibility of the successor of St. Peter, that I will dwell upon them for a moment.

It is contended, by those who uphold the Gallican claims, that the Definition of the Vatican Council is de-

structive of the powers of the whole Episcopate. "How," they say, "is it possible for the Bishops of the Catholic Church, the successors of the Apostles, commissioned like them to teach all truth, to judge what is truth, when there comes a conflict of opinions on matters of doctrine? Of what use is their judgment when it can be dispensed with or superseded by a dogmatical decree, issued at his caprice by the Roman Pontiff?" And building on this foundation a lofty vantage-ground, they warn from its summit the civil powers of Europe, to beware of the fearful consequences to their just authority, when a Pope, filled with ambitious projects, commands, by a decree *ex cathedra*, the two hundred millions of Catholics to espouse his cause.

It would seem, at first, that these wild ravings of slighted self-love had indeed produced an effect on the civil governments of Europe. This was foreseen by many of the Bishops assembled at the Council. They knew well that many of these governments would war against the Church if the decree of Papal Infallibility were once proclaimed. Hence they advised their brethren to be cautious. It was not because a few men like Bishop Maret, and Dr. Döllinger, and Père Hyacinthe would give way to temper at seeing their pet theories demolished by the Definition, and say very bitter things against the Vicar of Christ; but because they knew well, that the overwhelming and sudden blow to the deep schemes of the infidel ministers who were conspiring for the ruin of Christianity, would stir up these dangerous and unprincipled men to violent action against the liberties of the Church.

Those Bishops therefore, guided by sound prudence, advised, that the Definition should be deferred until bet-

ter times, when the machinations of the secret societies, directed by the infidel advisers of the ruling powers on the continent of Europe, being brought to light in all their hideous deformity, and their conspiracy against the Christian order of things fully exposed, there would have come about a healthy reaction.

It was interesting to watch closely the scheming and artifices employed by the reckless opponents of Christianity to turn this voice of warning against the interests of the Church. The Bishops, it was declared by the infidel press all over the world, were divided in opinion on the question of Papal Infallibility. It was most unfortunate, said those writers, who always pretended to be influenced by an earnest desire to serve the old Church, that the party in the Council who were struggling for its liberties and the rights of the Episcopate were in a minority. They declared continually that this minority would be forced, by threats of ecclesiastical censure, and the severe displeasure of the supreme Pontiff, to succumb to the Pope, and the greater crowd, who thought only of humoring the vanity of their despotic ruler. That therefore the Vatican Definition, if it were carried, would be wanting in the essential element of a free acceptance by the Council; that freedom of discussion and honest expression of judgment were out of the question; that consequently the Decree should necessarily be rejected by the Catholic world.

But now that it has "seemed good to the Holy Ghost" to make, in spite of these threats and warnings, the Papal Infallibility a defined article of Catholic Faith, what do we see?

The personal Infallibility of the successor of St. Peter is the firm belief of the Catholic Bishops and Clergy and



Laity who are in communion with the Holy See, throughout the whole world. And what has the result of the exaggerated and utterly false significance given to the warnings of the "opportunists" proved? That never, in the history of the Church, was there a General Council in which there was more striking evidence of the perfect freedom of discussion, than in the Council of the Vatican.

When we read the authentic records, we are amazed at the patience and calm consideration given to every view of those Bishops who, one after another, repeated the self-same opinions, abundantly refuted by the arguments, full of courage and manly eloquence, of the Bishops who rose in their estimate of things superior to all the threats and boastings of the powers of this world.

It has proved, moreover, that the secret societies, notwithstanding their professed contempt and scorn for the Holy See, have felt the blow even in the very depths of their secluded conventicles. The cry of rage and fury, and the howl of indignation that went up from these secret abodes, and found expression in their favorite journals throughout Europe; filled the general public with astonishment—that these men who, in the pride of their secret power, threatened to overturn thrones and dominations, were maddened beyond the control of cautious prudence and cunning strategy, by the voice of the old man "who never dies;" and who, stripped of all that this world calls power, can yet, by the ever-abiding help of the Holy Spirit, direct the destinies of empires and kingdoms, and powers and principalities.

When the few abettors of Gallicanism stir up its almost unheeded "Declarations," and try to persuade the Catholic world that the Definition of Papal Infallibility

is destructive to the judicial power of the Bishops, they know not what they say; or they foolishly call public attention to the wise and prudent action of the teaching Church in all its dogmatic declarations. When they talk of a Pope overruling, by his caprice, the judgment and the decisions of the Episcopate, they seem to forget what every one, who studies these subjects even lightly, well knows, that no decree concerning the Faith of the universal Church is determined on, till it has been submitted to the consideration of the Bishops all over the world.

“According to Catholic principles,” says Father Bottalla, in his able work, “The Pope and the Church,” “no definition of Faith can exist unless grounded on Apostolic tradition, and on the consent of the Churches” (Bottalla, p. 146). And again, he adds: “This is the reason why no theological doctrine can be defined as an object of Faith, until proof is given, either directly or indirectly, that the doctrine is derived by tradition from the Apostles: directly when it can be distinctly demonstrated, that the doctrine has always been held in the Church, and handed down from the beginning by the succession of Bishops; indirectly, when it can be proved, that in any of the past ages, or in our own, it was, or is, held as a doctrine of faith by the greatest part of the teaching body in the Church. In that case, its Apostolical origin is deduced indirectly; for without this origin no doctrine can be held as of faith by the body of the Church.” And farther on: “No Pope, before deciding a doctrinal question, has ever dispensed with these investigations which are calculated to verify the true tradition of the Church, and to insure that the doctrine to be defined has really Apostolic origin. And no Pope will dispense with

the necessary inquiry on the subject; for in the prerogative of infallibility is implied the fulfilment of all the conditions which are necessary for its exercise" (Bottalla, p. 147).

This would seem quite sufficient to dispose of the view, that the Pope, when he pleases, may rush into a dogmatic *ex cathedra* declaration.

When I see, in the public newspapers, the daring views hazarded on this subject, it seems to me that the editors are under the impression that the Holy Father may mistake a fit of temper, or indigestion, or any sudden impulse that disturbs his soul or body, for an inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and may issue a dogmatic decree under this influence with the same readiness as these worthies forge their thunderbolts against rival editors, for the delectation of the local public.

They may rest assured, and those also who rely confidently on the statements of these ephemeral productions, that "the Infallibility of the Church, and also that of the Pope, is the effect of Divine *assistance*, not of a supernatural *inspiration*, much less of revelation" (*ib.* 146).

But it may be said—"Suppose the Pope sends his instructions to the assembled or dispersed Bishops, and prejudices the question, and infallibly decides it; how, under these circumstances, can the Bishops be supposed to be judges of this particular doctrine?"

I reply, if the Holy Father sends mere instructions, these will not interfere with the freedom of discussion, because, even according to Cardinal Bellarmine, the great champion of Papal Infallibility, these are not properly infallible utterances of the Apostolic See. Even if the Pope actually defines a doctrine *ex cathedra*, before it is submitted to them, the Bishops can exercise their judgment.

When they subscribe the declarations of previous Ecu-  
menical Councils that have been confirmed, and published  
by the Roman Pontiff, which they generally do when  
assembled in Synod, they are exercising their judgment,  
and they sign accordingly,—“Judging I have subscribed.”  
This judgment is of course a dutiful submission to defined  
and infallible articles of Faith.

It is not by any means necessary that they should have  
the power of passing a sentence contrary to that of the  
supreme Judge; all that is required to enable them to  
exercise a wise and discreet judgment in the matter, is that  
they should have the right of examining the question,  
and satisfying themselves that the judgment is correct.

If it be asked, “What is the use of General Councils,  
when the Pope himself can decide the question with in-  
fallible certainty?” the answer will be clear from what I  
have said about the obligation of the Pope to inquire  
carefully into the tradition and teaching of the Church.

The following passage from St. Alphonsus fully meets  
the difficulty: “Sometimes, the sovereign Pontiff con-  
vokes councils, in order that he may be more enlightened  
by the Holy Ghost, by means of the discussions carried  
on in the council in some doubt on matters of faith; for  
Cardinal Du Perron says: ‘The Infallibility of the Pope  
does not consist in his always receiving at once from the  
Holy Ghost the necessary light to decide questions of  
faith, but in his deciding without error in matters in  
which he feels himself sufficiently enlightened by God,  
while he sends other questions on which he does not feel  
himself sufficiently enlightened, to be decided by the  
council, in order that afterwards he may pronounce his  
own judgment.’” (“Defence of the Power of the Pope  
against Febronius,” ch. vii.)

The chief point to be kept before the mind in answering difficulties of this kind, is that the Holy Father is assisted by the Spirit of God Divinely promised, and is not inspired nor gifted with a sensible supernatural light, nor guided by a voice from Heaven, in his judgment: but so guided, when he has taken all prudent and ordinary means of arriving at the knowledge of truth by careful study, and the advice of the Episcopal body, if the circumstances of the case admit such consultation, that he cannot deceive the universal Church when he pronounces the final decision and utters the formal definition concerning the belief of the Church.

I may here mention that if a case could possibly be imagined, which it cannot, consistently with the promises of our Divine Lord, wherein a Pope should manifestly and obstinately profess heretical doctrines, he would immediately cease to be Pope. This, according to Suarez, is the unanimous opinion of all theologians (Suarez De Fide Disp., X. sec. vi. nn. 6-11).

The reason is that, in this impossible supposition, he would at once cease to be the source of Episcopal Unity and of life in the Church; for he himself would, by his heresy, be out of that unity with the Church which springs from Faith.

The Gallican opinion that the *ex cathedra* decrees of the Pope were infallible, if accepted, or rather not rejected, by the majority of the Bishops, involves a supposition utterly incompatible with the existence of a living Church; that is to say, a speaking Head and a speaking decapitated body in conflict with each other.

It involves other difficulties also, which would render it impossible for the Church to be a constant teacher of the Divine truth. It would not, in the Gallican hypoth-



esis, be absolutely and at all times infallible ; but only occasionally, when it would, after a long interval of anxious suspense, be ascertained beyond doubt that the Catholic Bishops (when no council could be held), dispersed throughout the world, agreed in the doctrinal definition published by the Holy Father.

In this supposition also, it would not be the successor of St. Peter who would perform St. Peter's office of confirming his brethren in the Episcopate: but the Bishops who would confirm *him*. This is evidently contrary to the express words of our Divine Lord,—“Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren” (Luke xxii. 31, 32).

If we picture to ourselves such a state of things, as when the deadly heresy of Arius was desolating the Church,—when, as St. Jerome remarked, “the whole world was astonished to find itself Arian,”—what remedy would be found in the confirmation of a Pontifical decree by the dispersed Church? To ascertain this consent with any degree of certainty would require a great amount of learning, and the opportunity of examining various documents. This would clearly be beyond the power of the majority of Catholics.

And if many bishops were tainted with pernicious error, as they were when Arius denied the Divinity of our Lord, what a work it would be to collate the different opinions of the Episcopate, and to calculate the majority!

Let us suppose for a moment that some grave errors of liberalism crept into the seats of Catholic learning, and that false principles, carefully concealed in the garb of a popular philosophy, were to find their way into the

minds of those destined for the ministry; and that in time these scarcely perceptible seeds of heresy were, like the tares in the parable, to grow up amidst the good grain; and Bishops were to be found in numbers, all over the world, advocating the progress of these new ideas, sure in the course of time to blight the prospects of the Faith. Any one who will carefully consider the circumstances of this case will see at once that no remedy could be found to check this formidable evil, in the system which imagines that the dogmatic decree of the Holy Father denouncing these errors should first of all obtain the sanction of the dispersed Church before it could absolutely condemn them.

Some people imagine that General Councils can be held whenever it is desirable to have the sense of the universal Church, on dangerous opinions such as these I have alluded to. But, even in these days of easy communication, governments, opposed to the interests of Christianity, could easily throw such impediments in the way of a large *concursus* of Bishops, as would effectually hinder the assembling of a General Council.

The Council of the Vatican, the first after an interval of three hundred years, suspended its deliberations not one moment too soon. It would have fared ill with the assembled Bishops if the infidel scum of Europe had found them in the Holy City after its sacrilegious invasion.

It was three hundred years after the birth of Christianity before the difficulties in the way of assembling a council were removed. Yet there existed many of those serious evils which are best encountered by the accumulated power of such an assembly, ravaging the fold of Christ.

In that long period, the Papal decisions alone held in

check, and finally stamped out, the rapidly-spreading conflagration of error. The Gallican system would have miserably perished in the fires it would have enkindled, had it been in operation in these early days of bitter trial to the one true Faith.

What I have said here about the efficacy of Papal decisions in destroying heresy is a sufficient answer to the objection, that the definition of Papal Infallibility is an innovation, and a change in the old plan of teaching dogmatic truth. Of course this verges on the debatable ground of history, which is too large an area for a book like this. But a short passage from an admirable compendium, called the "Threshold of the Catholic Church," may be readily admitted :

"The Popes have never allowed any appeal from their teaching. They have decided hundreds of points of doctrine, and never yet allowed any one to wait to see how the Church would accept their decisions. Any one attempting to appeal to a future General Council has been most unhesitatingly excommunicated and anathematized. The Church has submitted to all this without one word of remonstrance. If the Popes had not thoroughly believed in their Infallible authority, would not this have been the height of tyranny? If the Church, too, had not thoroughly believed in it, would it not have been extreme cowardice and unfaithfulness to have submitted to it?" ("The Threshold of the Catholic Church," p. 270.)

And now, as I have touched on the historical aspect of the question, and prominently alluded to the great Arian heresy, I will give my readers an idea of what Cardinal Newman thinks of one of the strongest historical objections urged by the opponents of Papal Infallibility—the condemnation of St. Athanasius by Pope Liberius.

“Liberius,” says the Cardinal, “anathematized Athanasius on a point in which Athanasius was right and Liberius was wrong. But it is astonishing to me how any one can fancy that Liberius, in subscribing the Arian confessions, promulgated them ‘*ex cathedra*,’ considering he was not his own master when he signed them, and that they were not his drawing up. Who would say that it would be a judgment of the Queen’s Bench, or a judicial act of any kind, if ribbon-men in Ireland seized on one of her Majesty’s judges, hurried him into the wilds of Connemara, and there made him, under terror of his life, sign a document in the very teeth of an award which he had lately made in court on a question of property? Surely for an *ex cathedra* decision of the Pope is required his formal initiation of it, his authorship of its wording, and his utterance amid his court, with solemnities parallel to those of an Ecumenical Council. It is not a transaction that can be done in his travelling-dress, in some hedge-side inn, or town tavern, or imperial servants’ hall. Liberius’ subscription can only claim a Nag’s Head sort of Infallibility.” (“Historical Sketches,” Vol. II. p. 340.)

It would be very easy to show similarly that the cases alleged, in which some two or three Popes taught error, all break down here. They were not then teaching the universal Church *ex cathedra*, or as the Universal Doctors pronouncing a Dogma of Faith.

Of course every well-instructed Catholic knows that the Pope, when he gives a theological opinion, or suggests to the Episcopate his personal views of a disputed point, for the purpose of discussion, and not for teaching the Church, is then as fallible as any other theologian or learned Doctor.

If it be asked, how are we certainly to know whether

the Pope is teaching *ex cathedra* or not? I answer that there are certain rules and forms well known in the Church, by which this can be ascertained without difficulty. And if it be contended that cases may arise where, notwithstanding these forms, or because the Pope did not in particular instances, as in the condemnation of heretical books and false principles, exactly follow them, or set them aside altogether, and that there would be necessarily doubt: the shortest answer to this imaginary difficulty is: If there is doubt, the Pope may be asked, and his declaration will at once set the matter at rest.

In order to bring out more distinctly these principles on which Papal Infallibility is founded, and to show how they are practically applied, I mean, in the next chapter, to point out briefly what was done in preparing and proclaiming the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. This will fairly introduce the grand question of what is called "Romish Modern Corruptions," which I purpose to meet, by what Cardinal Newman calls the "ineffably cogent argument of Development of Doctrine," under the guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, the life and soul of the great Catholic Church.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Application of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility  
to the Immaculate Conception.

IF the dogma of the Immaculate Conception were properly understood by non-Catholics, there would have been no outcry against the Definition of the dogma, such as has in these recent years disturbed the Catholic world. Those who believe in the fundamental mystery of revealed religion—"The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 14)—would have seen, in the *ex cathedra* declaration of the supreme Pontiff, only the natural inference from a truth which, from the first announcement of the good tidings of salvation, has been the consolation and hope of all true believers.

The great God, "by whom all things were made," and "who existed from the beginning," actually became one of us, was born into this world of sin, and had a mortal mother: this is the faith of every one, Protestant as well as Catholic, who believes fully and really in the Divinity of Christ. This intimate union of the Divinity with our humanity, in the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, necessarily involves peculiar purity and holiness in the woman chosen out of all the human race, "blessed above all women," for the purpose of giving flesh and blood to the all-holy God.

Even they who see in the person of Christ only a great Prophet, and one whose bitter enemies were forced to declare spoke as no other man, and was "wonderful in

word and work," feel drawn, instinctively and naturally, to honor His blessed Mother, as one peerless among her sex.

In the third chapter of the Koran, which is entitled "The Family of Imram," we see that even Mahomet had clear perceptions of this truth, and that there was something of an extraordinary character connected with the conception and birth of the Virgin-Mother of Jesus. In Sale's translation, we read, that after the wife of Imram (Anna the mother of Mary) brought forth the female child destined to be the Mother of Christ, she said, "Verily I have brought forth a female, I have called her Mary, and I commend her to thy protection, and also her issue against Satan, driven away with stones. Therefore the Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance, and caused her to bear an excellent offspring."

The Koran was written in the seventh century, and Celali, explaining the passage after the Mahomedan traditions, in the fifteenth century, says: "In the histories it is said, no one is born but Satan touches him at his birth, and therefore he bursts into weeping except Mary and her Son" (Marracci, "Alcorani Refutatio," *in locum*).

The same is repeated, a century later, by Hossein Vaes, in his Persian commentary (D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orient.*, art. Miriam). Cotada confirms the Mahomedan opinion in these words: "Every one born of Adam is pierced in the side by the touch of Satan when born except Jesus and his Mother: for God put a veil between them and Satan, so that the touch of Satan was arrested in the veil, nor did it touch them in any part. Moreover it is narrated to us that neither of them committed any sin, as the other children of Adam do" (Marracci, *ibid*).

Sale, in his note on Mahomet's text, says : " It is not improbable that the pretended immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary is intimated in this passage."

No wonder Bishop Ullathorne, from whose learned book on the Immaculate Conception I have borrowed these passages, should say that the respect which Mahomet and his followers have always expressed towards the Blessed Virgin should put to shame many who profess themselves Christians.

I believe that there are many non-Catholics who rail at the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, without knowing in the least what it means, and who suppose that it has something to do with the manner in which the Blessed Virgin conceived of the Holy Ghost, or gave birth to the Saviour.

For the enlightenment of such as these, I may be excused for saying that the Immaculate Conception refers to the daughter of Anna, who, we believe, was, by a special privilege, preserved, at the moment of her conception in the womb of Anna, from that curse of original sin in which, as the Royal Prophet says, we are all conceived—"For behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. l. 7).

The opposition which better-informed Protestants offer to the belief of the Church is founded mainly on their peculiar notions about original sin. "Our doctrine," says Cardinal Newman, "is not the same as the Protestant doctrine. Original sin, with us, cannot be called sin, in the mere ordinary sense of the word 'sin;' it is a term denoting Adam's sin as transferred to us, or the state to which Adam's sin reduces his children; but by Protestants it seems to be understood as sin, in much the same sense as actual sin. We, with the Fathers, think of

it as something negative : Protestants, as something positive. Protestants hold that it is a disease, a radical change of nature, an active poison, internally corrupting the soul, infecting its primary elements, and disorganizing it : and they fancy that we ascribe a different nature from ours to the Blessed Virgin, different from that of her parents, and from that of fallen Adam. We hold nothing of the kind : we consider that in Adam she died as others ; that she was included, together with the whole race, in Adam's sentence ; that she incurred his debt, as we do ; but that, for the sake of Him who was to redeem her and us upon the cross, to her the debt was remitted by anticipation, on her the sentence was not carried out, except indeed as regards natural death, for she died when her time came, as others. All this we teach, but we deny that she had original sin ; for by original sin we mean, as I have already said, something negative, viz., this only : the *deprivation* of that supernatural unmerited grace which Adam and Eve had on their first formation,—deprivation and the consequences of deprivation. Mary could not merit, any more than they, the restoration of that grace ; but it was restored to her by God's free bounty, from the very first moment of her existence, and thereby, in fact, she never came under the original curse, which consisted in the loss of it. And she had this special privilege, in order to fit her to become the Mother of her and our Redeemer, to fit her mentally and spiritually for it ; so that, by the aid of the first grace, she might so grow in grace, that when the angel came and her Lord was at hand, she might be ' full of grace,' prepared, as far as a creature could be prepared, to receive Him into her bosom." (" Anglican Difficulties," p. 396.)

I could not help giving this long extract, because it

seems to me to remove the entire difficulty which intelligent non-Catholics see in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Many years ago, shortly after my ordination, and while engaged in giving short lectures to the people confided to my spiritual care, I was fiercely assailed on this very point by an Anglican clergyman of considerable ability. He maintained, that by teaching that Mary was conceived without sin, I was manifestly separating our Divine Saviour from the human race. I did not then understand, as clearly as I do now, the Protestant notion of original sin; and hence my explanation of the doctrine was treated with indifference if not with contempt. I really could not imagine at the time how any Christian could believe that a Catholic priest, who is continually setting before his people the reality and fulness of the mystery of God in the flesh, the source of every sacramental grace, and the sum and substance of all Christian Faith and Hope and Charity, could attempt in his teaching to divide Christ, and induce them to believe that the God-Man was not really our Brother.

Let me then assure any non-Catholic readers who may be curious to know what the Church really teaches about the Immaculate Conception, that it does not concern any one but Mary herself, that it has reference only to her own person, and has nothing whatever to do with Joachim and Anna, her father and mother.

She was, as the schoolmen say, *actively* conceived in the womb of her mother, like any other human being. The germ of her body was formed in the usual natural manner, but at the moment when God infused a soul into this germ, and made of the soul and body one individual being, or in her *passive* conception, this person was, by the



antecedent merits of the Saviour applied in an extraordinary manner, preserved or exempted from the deprivation of original supernatural grace, caused in the rest of mankind by the sin of Adam, "in whom," as the Apostle says, "we have all sinned" (Rom. v. 12).

To render this plainer, I will use some of the words of the late Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, Cardinal De-champs. His Eminence points out, that there is always a direct action of God in the gift of life which He bestows upon us, and he makes use of the simple words of the Catechism, to enable every one come to the use of reason, to take up his explanation. The Catechism asks, "Is God your Father?" "Yes," we answer, "God is our Father, and far more so than our parents; because by them He formed our bodies, whilst He Himself created our souls out of nothing."

God is then always creating new human beings, and it is the creation of the soul and its union with the body which constitutes human nature. The Immaculate Conception therefore is a Divine act, the act by which God, in creating the soul of Mary, and uniting it to the body which He destined for it, preserved it from the general contagion. It was indeed a great exception, a wonderful privilege; and Mary was in this way "highly favored," as the Protestant Version translates the "*gratia plena*" of the Vulgate.

But this favor was quite in keeping with the designs of Infinite mercy, and the exigencies of Infinite holiness. He could give up everything else for the sake of His unworthy creatures,—Bliss, Glory, Honor, Manly Dignity; but His Sanctity He could not part with; nor could He ally it to a body and soul that had ever borne the taint and "deprivation" of original sin.

This will, I think, sufficiently explain what is meant by the Immaculate Conception. Will any one say that God could not bestow this great privilege on the creature chosen out of all women to be the Virgin-Mother of His only Son? Can any one presume to think that an exception of this kind was unworthy of God's greatness; or that He who bore the heavy weight of our iniquities, and shared all our sorrows, set a limit unworthy of His unbounded love for the human race, because He did not actually partake in sin, which would have robbed Him also of His sanctity?

"Give me another Mother of God," exclaims Bossuet, "and then fear to make an exception."

I will now proceed to show that the definition of this dogma was perfectly in accordance with the principles on which I have explained the reasonableness of the Infallibility of the Church, and of the supreme Head of the Church on earth.

Every Catholic knows that the late Holy Father Pius IX. possessed, in an eminent degree, that tender devotion to the Mother of God which the Saints and Fathers of the Church consider one of the most striking marks of a happy predestination. There is not a document issued under the hands and bearing the signature of Pius IX., that does not bear testimony to this devotion. With him it was the active principle of a life spent in the service of his Divine Master, to ask every grace and blessing through the intercession of Mary. Such was his profound humility that, though blameless, as far as those who knew him best could judge, of any wilful sin, he dared not appear in the presence of the All-Holy, save in company with her whom he loved to salute with the endearing name of Mother. He seemed, in the midst of

joy or tribulation, to have her always near his inmost thoughts, thus realizing to himself the last command of Christ to the disciple whom He loved,—“Son, behold thy Mother.”

Did he therefore yield to a feeling of enthusiasm, and, without consulting the Bishops of the Church, at once proclaim the dogma in which he always firmly believed?

Far from it. For many years before his elevation to the Papal throne, a great number of Bishops had applied to the Holy See to have this faith, generally received throughout the Church, sanctioned by some formal act.

Perrone gives an authentic list of three hundred Bishops or heads of religious orders who, between 1834 and 1847, had asked the Holy Father for authority to insert the word “Immaculate” in the preface of the Mass of the Conception.

After the accession of Pius IX., when Provincial Synods were revived, many of these, for example those of Sens, of Rheims, of Avignon, of Tours, and of Baltimore, where the whole Episcopacy of the United States was assembled, made a formal declaration of faith in the doctrine. “During the same Pontificate,” as Bishop Ullathorne observes, “petitions flowed in from Prelates in all parts of the world, asking the Holy See to pronounce a dogmatic decision upon the mystery.”

In the February of 1849, the Encyclical letter was published at Gaeta and addressed to all the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic world, informing them of the general desire to have the dogma declared an Article of Catholic Faith.

In this document, the Holy Father tells them that he had appointed a commission of most distinguished Cardinals to make a most accurate examination of the whole

question. He urges them to enjoin prayers in their respective dioceses, that he may be illuminated with Heavenly light, to enable him to decide what is most to the glory of God. Finally, he most earnestly calls upon all Bishops to signify to him, as early as practicable, what the devotion of the clergy and people of his diocese is towards the Immaculate Conception; and how far they felt the desire to see it defined by the Holy See. But especially, and above all, did he express his desire that the Bishops themselves would convey to him what was their own sentiment and desire on the subject.

It may be new to non-Catholic readers, who are probably under the impression so commonly conveyed by the enemies of the Church, that Pope Pius was animated by senile vanity, and the desire of making a reputation for himself by the solemnity of a formal Definition, that letters from upwards of six hundred Bishops poured into Rome. Every one, without exception, expressed his firm belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and his devotion towards the mystery of God's love and power. I quote still from the learned Bishop above named. Four only raised any objection to its being defined. But fifty-two, while declaring themselves satisfied as to the sufficiency of theological reasons for such a Definition, and themselves prepared for it, yet hesitated as to its opportuneness at the present moment. Still, all, whatever might be their own opinions, professed themselves most ready to obey whatever emanated from the Holy See upon the subject.

It would be impossible to crowd into one chapter the account of the various consultations that were made by special commissions and congregations of Cardinals and eminent theologians. The documents on the matter

were published by order of the Holy Father, and fill nine large volumes. Everything was done that human prudence could suggest, to have the subject carefully and thoroughly discussed, and to reason out all the difficulties that had ever been raised against the dogma in the schools of theology.

This went on during the years 1852-53, after the return of Pope Pius IX. to Rome. At last all was ready for the solemn Definition. Then the Holy Father, surrounded by one hundred and fifty-two mitred Bishops, fifty-three Cardinals, more than two hundred Prelates of an inferior order, a vast body of clergy, and some thirty or forty thousand people, declared that "It is a dogma of faith that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."

But it may be said, what is the use of all this inquiry and study, and heaping up of authorities of Fathers and theologians, and this solemn declaration, when the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is not to be found in "the Scriptures of truth"? Nay, more: how can that become an article of Faith which is in direct contradiction to the express teaching of St. Paul—that in Adam we have all sinned, all without exception?—"For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23); and again—"And so death passed upon all men, in whom we have all sinned" (Rom. v. 12).

Surely this is decisive against the new doctrine, and is a clear proof that Rome is ever adding "the traditions of men" to the everlasting Gospel.

I answer, first as regards the teaching of St. Paul: This



teaching of St. Paul, in the third and fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is fully believed in its literal and obvious sense by the Church. This is clear from the passage quoted above from Cardinal Newman, who, grounding his teaching on the doctrine of the most learned Catholic theologians, Bellarmine, Suarez, and others, says that all without exception, even the Blessed Virgin, have incurred the deprivation consequent on original sin. She in this sense has sinned. She was necessarily, by the fact of being conceived as a human being, and a descendant of Adam, under the obligation and the debt contracted by the whole human race. But in her case the debt was remitted by anticipation, for the sake of the Redeemer. She did not therefore actually come under the guilt of original sin. She was not for a single instant deprived of the supernatural grace forfeited by our first parents. She never therefore incurred the guilt of original sin, which consists in the loss of this unmerited grace.

The common and universal law declared by St. Paul deprived the Blessed Virgin, as all other human beings, of the *right* to this grace: but the merits of Christ extended to her, in a special and wonderful manner, restored to her that right at the moment when she came into existence as a person.

Suarez beautifully applies to her the words of Assuerus to Esther, as if God the Almighty said to her, "This law is not made for thee, but for all others" (Esther xv. 13).

Why this special favor of exemption from the general debt was made in her case, is shown in the passage of Dr. Newman to which I have referred. Sin in any shape or form could not touch her, through whom a fallen race was to be intimately united with the Holiness of God.

And here, in passing, I may note an objection once put to me by an intelligent Catholic, not for the purpose of cavilling at the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but for his own instruction on a point which seemed difficult for him to understand.

“You insist,” he said, “much on the sinlessness of Mary, in order that she might be most closely united with the All-Holy God; but are not sinners admitted to a union with the same God in the Holy Communion? The real partaking of the Body of the Lord does not depend on the Faith or good dispositions of the receiver: for the wicked and the unworthy eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Lord to their own destruction.”

The answer is simple. The wicked and the unworthy do indeed receive the Body of the Lord in the way of food; but there is no union between them and the sacred Person of Christ. Their souls are dead through mortal sin, and therefore cannot partake of that spiritual refec-tion which is afforded to those who are in the state of grace. Instead of nourishing them by enabling them “to abide in Christ” according to His blessed promise (John vi. 57), “they are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. xi. 27). “*Sancta sanctis*,” “Holy things to the holy,” say all the old Liturgies, applying the words of our Divine Lord—“Give not that which is holy to dogs” (Matt. vii. 6)—to the Blessed Sacrament. Hence St. Ambrose says: “No one receives the food of Christ unless he is first restored to health” (Lib. VI. in Luc., c. ix.). It is well known that even healthy food administered to those whose ill-health prevents them from assimilating it, may produce serious disorders; so I need not dwell longer upon this point.

I now return to the first part of the objection, which

is constantly in the mouths of those who charge the Church with corrupting the pure doctrine of Christ.

“Where,” say they, “is this doctrine laid down clearly in the Bible? We cannot find it anywhere stated, in the Scriptures, that Mary was conceived without sin; and therefore this new doctrine can form no part of the Deposit of the Faith.”

This argument, and every similar one built on the absence of formal and direct teaching in the written Word of God, is founded on what is called, in logic, a *petitio principii*, a taking for granted the very thing that is in dispute. Here comes in the subject-matter of this entire book—the Rule of Faith.

I think I have conclusively shown that “the Bible and the Bible only” is not a safe Rule, nor one of general application; and that it can never enable men, as long as they dispute about the meaning of its written words, to reach the real ground of Faith, the certain knowledge of what God has taught.

It is clear, too, that this Rule contradicts itself in the most palpable manner. For it lays down, as the foundation of all Faith, that nothing is to be believed which is not contained in Scripture, and yet in no part of the sacred Scriptures can we find it clearly taught that we are to confine our belief to what is written there.

The Catholic Rule of Faith is completely different. We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, and His perpetual guide and assistance in enabling the teaching Church, and the Head of the teaching Church, to point out clearly and infallibly the meaning of all that is contained, whether in the written Word or the Traditions handed down to us from the days of the Apostles.

If in the writings of the Fathers, and in the acts of

Councils, and the teaching of the supreme Pontiff, we find an explanation and development of truths only indicated in the sacred volume; and that this doctrine has been constantly maintained in the Church, then we believe, without the least doubt or misgiving, that this doctrine is certainly revealed by God.

If we apply this principle to the Immaculate Conception, the arguments founded on the Protestant Rule of Faith are without the least weight. The only question is, what has the living, speaking Divine authority taught? and to the solution of this question all the careful research and prolonged study which preceded the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception were directed.

Those who will give themselves the trouble, not of going through the nine large tomes published by order of Pius IX., but a short compendium, such as the book of Bishop Ullathorne on the Immaculate Conception, will find enough to satisfy them, that abundant evidence was accumulated by the Congregations of Cardinals and Theologians to establish the fact that the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin had always been, from the earliest times, the almost unanimous belief of the Catholic Church.

If it be asked, why there was ever any difference of opinion in the Church on the subject, the answer is, that in the middle ages, when scholastic theology was fulfilling its grand task of formulating and accurately defining the exact limits of sound doctrine, there were certain great and pious minds, which, notwithstanding their attraction to this truth, experienced a hesitation on the subject, which they submitted to the judgment of the Church.

From want of precision in the very idea of the conception, and not distinguishing between the Active and

Passive Conception, it was feared that Catholic Faith in this doctrine, which should be the result of a Definition, might affect the doctrine of original sin.

Hence there were different schools of theologians, who only awaited the Definition of the Dogma to profess with one mouth the same identical doctrine.

If it should be further asked, why should the late Pontiff Pius IX. have felt himself particularly called upon to proclaim the Definition? the shortest answer to this would be, that "it is not for us," any more than it was for the Apostles after the Resurrection, "to know the times or moments which the Father had put in his own power" (Acts i. 7). We believe in the Holy Ghost, the guide of the Catholic Church, now, as He was when the Apostles received from Him the power to "be witnesses unto Christ to the uttermost bounds of the earth" (*ib.* 8).

But we may, in the events of these latter times, see almost manifestly why "it would seem good to the Holy Ghost" that the Vicar of Christ should define this doctrine. Never was there an age in which intellectual pride asserted itself so strongly. Men would fain forget the fall of the human race which sprung from Pride.

The prevailing opinion, I do not say belief,—for Faith there is almost none outside the Church,—is that man is quite sufficient for himself, and can do without God. It was well to remind the proud world, therefore, of the reality of its fall, and of its need of the hand of God for its restoration.

This could not be done more effectually than by proclaiming the revealed truth, that one creature alone has been exempted from it, because she was to be the Mother of the new Adam, the Head of the regenerate human family.



The definition of the Immaculate Conception also stamps with reality the fact, almost forgotten or ignored by those who will not hear the Church, that the only Son of God, at a certain definite time, entered into this world of ours, became a man like one of us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and had a mortal mother.

In proclaiming this new glory of the ever-Blessed Virgin, the Church asserts, in the strongest way possible for her, the reality of that union between the Divinity and our humanity, which is the foundation of revealed religion, the explanation of every mystery, and the sole ground of Christian Hope.

To use the eloquent words of Cardinal Dechamps,—“It was an event in doctrine ; a flower had expanded on the eternal tree of truth, and the eyes which are not attracted are dazzled by its brightness. It was an event in morals. The general impression which it has produced bears witness to the death-struggle of indifferentism in the nations of Christendom, and the presence of a spirit of religion which men had too hastily believed to be extinct. Those whom that spirit does not console are disturbed at its presence. It was a social event, and, as it were, an unexpected apparition of the Supreme authority upon earth, of that spiritual and teaching authority which alone has children among all nations.”

I mean, in the next chapter, to combat the unjust prejudice which fallible and unauthorized teaching endeavors to excite against “the Church spread throughout the world, and in communion with the See of Rome,” when it classes the glorious Dogma of the Immaculate Conception with the idle fables it affects to abhor ; and stigmatizes the honor thus paid to the Mother of God, as “one of the latest outcomes of Romish corruption.”

## CHAPTER XV.

**“Modern Romish Corruptions,” and Development under the Guidance of the Spirit of Truth.**

WHATEVER notions non-Catholics may form about “the everlasting Church,” there is one which seems fixed in their minds; and it is, that if there exists such an institution in the present world, it is old-fashioned and out of keeping with the times. It can only record the hazy traditions of the dark ages; or, if quickened into action by the onward march of progress, it can only trifle with human intelligence, by elaborating new doctrines, which never entered into the mind of the Divine Founder of Christianity.

This is about the real estimate of Catholicity formed by free-thought at the present day, whether announced in leading articles or in the pages of magazines and reviews. When men of genius and learning devote their talents to startle the reading world with new theories of religion utterly regardless of Catholic teaching, except as a thing to be kicked out of their way with scorn and contempt; and the hard-worked editors of newspapers, if they, through lack of other matter, devote a paragraph to the subject, strive only to be sensational at the expense of truth, there is but a poor chance for the public, who feed their minds on these ephemeral productions, of knowing anything reliable about the Catholic religion.

When I read some of these amusing paragraphs evidently penned by men who would have the public be-

lieve “they know all about it,” and note the extraordinary association of ideas, I think of the editor in *Pickwick*, who, when he would elucidate the metaphysics of the Chinese, found out in the encyclopædia the word China and then Metaphysics, and “combined his information.”

I must confess I am often strongly tempted to select some of the most enjoyable of these scraps of learning, and to publish them with short comments indicating the probable meaning, and sources of information, as “curiosities in literature.”

It is particularly interesting to watch the newspapers when the old Church brings out of her vast treasury some truth that seems new, and by its apparent freshness excites a passing interest even in the busy world. It is positively amazing to see how very little the leaders of public opinion know about it, and yet with what “prodigious” dogmatism they expound, according to their own views, that little. They are bound to write about it, of course, for the public curiosity must be gratified; but then any ordinarily instructed Catholic can see that they have gathered their information at haphazard, and put the heterogeneous material together without serious thought or discrimination.

When I remember the extraordinary effusions I have read about Papal Infallibility, and the Immaculate Conception, and the Sacred Heart, I know not whether to smile or grieve over these recollections. There is such an air of profundity and solemn, if not solid, erudition infused into these creations of the imagination; and the atoms of fact, picked up here and there, are so gravely distorted and twisted about, to make them fit together, that one finds it difficult to suppress a natural tendency to laugh. But in truth, real heart-felt sorrow over the

desecration of holy things is the only feeling that is warrantable under the circumstances.

I have noticed already something of this kind that appeared in a kindly-meant review to the Introduction of “Catholic Christianity and Modern Unbelief” published recently in a colonial newspaper. The editor was extremely courteous; but when he went on to say that if the Catholic Church were to persist in inventing dogmas of Faith, the original revelation would soon be completely swamped in the outflow of these new doctrines, I felt fairly overcome by what a reverend antagonist once called my “emotional nature,” and, forgetting for the moment the gravity of the subject, burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

But I see now that this was very inexcusable, if it was a “human act” at all, for I find in the course of my reading up, for this book, the writings of distinguished Protestant divines, that even greater absurdities are perpetrated by them in their estimate of Catholic doctrine, than were struck off in a hurried half-hour by the luckless editor to whom I have just alluded.

When the learned and much respected Dr. Pusey fell into the grave theological blunder of mistaking the assistance and help of the Holy Ghost for a real hypostatical incarnation, and insinuated that such a monstrous union was necessarily involved in the Infallibility of the Pope, I certainly ought to have controlled my emotional nature at the slip of my good friend, who was only good-naturedly warning me of the danger which suddenly flashed upon his overburdened mind at the sight of my “recklessness” in upholding Infallibility.

Some time ago, Dr. Littledale published a manual to deter anxious Anglo-Catholics from joining the Catholic

Church “in communion with the Holy See.” I read this book, as I feel bound to read every book assailing the Church that comes in my way; and I found in it such grave errors regarding Catholic dogma and theology,—I will not add history, for mistakes in this department of learning cannot be avoided by one in his position,—but in reference to doctrine,—that perfectly astounded me.

I was once strongly moved to write and correct something extravagant about the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which I read also in a colonial newspaper; but am glad I did not, now that I have read the strange things which Dr. Littledale has written upon the subject. When this clergyman, distinguished for his learning, and remarkable for his High-Church proclivities, makes serious mistakes on the very nature of this devotion, it would be unfair to find fault with one who treated it, in a paragraph of his paper, according to the view of ordinary prejudice.

“The modern worship of the Sacred Heart is,” Dr. Littledale says (page 121), “sheer heresy, condemned by the two General Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, which forbade any worship being paid to a divided Christ.” Surely he ought to know that the condemnation in these two Councils of the worshippers of a divided Christ is simply a condemnation of Nestorianism, of a worship terminating in a twofold personality.

Nestorius denied that Mary was the Mother of God, maintaining obstinately that she was the Mother only of the man Christ. The Catholic doctrine on the subject of the Sacred Heart makes no such division. Dr. Littledale could easily have ascertained this from any popular Catholic work on the subject. But just in the same way as Dr. Pusey reasoned about the Infallibility, probably saying to himself, “How could the Pope be guided by the



Holy Ghost, unless the Holy Ghost resided personally within him,” thus losing sight of the vast difference between mere assistance and personal union; so this distinguished Anglo-Catholic divine, who believes, it must be presumed, in his own Infallibility, else he could not dare to keep any earnest Christians from entering the “one Fold,” reasons on the Devotion of the Sacred Heart.

“How could Catholics,” he must have thought, “worship this material Heart, if they did not divide the humanity of Christ?”

Can anything be more plainly against the idea of such division than the teaching of the Church?

“The object of the worship yielded to the Incarnate Word is the whole Christ; hence, as Christ possesses a double nature, human and Divine, a partial object of that worship is the humanity including His body. And inasmuch as the body consists of various members, each of these members constitutes a partial object: but the formal object, the wherefore of the direction of such and so great a worship upon them, is the Divinity of the Word whose own they are in virtue of the hypostatic union. The faithful do not adore the Heart of Jesus, separating or prescinding from the Divinity, when they worship it as it is, the Heart of Jesus—the Heart of the Person of the Word to which it is inseparably united.” (Hurter, quoted by Father Ryder in his “Reply” to Littleton.)

The faithful specially direct their worship to the Sacred Heart, because the heart is the natural symbol of the love of the Saviour. The reason they worship the Sacred Heart at all is because it is eternally and inseparably united to the Divine Person. They give the Heart

prominence in this devotion, because it brings more strikingly before them the fact of His Infinite love. That the principle of this devotion is nothing new in the Catholic Church will be abundantly proved to any one who will read this manual of Father Ryder.

I have seen many things written against the Immaculate Conception, in which it is styled “one of the most prominent of the modern corruptions of Rome,” and I find that the main difficulty with Protestant writers on the subject is, that here, like in the cases of the Personal Infallibility, and the Devotion of the Sacred Heart, the true doctrine is not understood.

There is at the bottom of all the theological objections to this dogma, either an ignorance of the true nature of original sin, or the idea that we Catholics attribute to the Blessed Virgin sinlessness the same as the Infinite Sanctity of God. Original sin is a deprivation of the original state of supernatural and unmerited grace, in which Adam was created. The Blessed Virgin was exceptionally preserved from this privation, not through her own merits, but by the antecedent merits of her Divine Son.

She is sinless by being freed from sin, through a special favor of God. The sinlessness of Christ arises from the inherent and essential sanctity of the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity.

It would weary my readers to lead them through the different “corrupt doctrines” attributed to the Church “spread throughout the world and in communion with the See of Rome.”

There is one great principle which proves that the Church cannot adopt any corruptions either in doctrine or morality or worship, and that is because she is now, as

ever, and will be to the consummation of the world, assisted in avoiding all corruptions of this kind by the unfailing guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

But it will be said, and with every appearance of truth, the Church does not believe now, nor worship now, as she did in early times. There are devotions in modern times, and doctrines too, which were unknown to the primitive Christians; and these must be, from the nature of the case, the inventions of men, and therefore manifest corruptions of the original Deposit of the Faith. There are festivals, too, of which primitive Christianity knew nothing: *Corpus Christi*, for example; the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and ever so many other festivals of the Blessed Virgin; the feast of the Sacred Heart, and others, the institution of which, with date and other particulars, may be seen in Butler, or any other Catholic work of authority recognized by Catholics. Are not these novelties, as well as the doctrines they commemorate?—and, on the principle that “whatever is new cannot be true,” or that of St. Vincent Lerins—“*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*” (“That which was believed always, that which was believed everywhere, that which was believed by all”)—they are unquestionably innovations; and consequently corruptions of the original “Faith once delivered to the Saints.”

There would be something in this argument, if it could be shown that any modern devotion or doctrine *contradicted* the Faith of the Apostolic and primitive ages.

If, for example, the Church in these days taught that the foundation rested not on Peter or the “Rock” immovably fixed by Christ, but upon the King or Queen, or child who might happen to hold the reins of civil government; and that instead of there being one visible

foundation, there were as many as there are civil rulers in the world,—this indeed would be something altogether new, and not only new, but in direct opposition to the “ideal of a Christian Church,” as understood by all antiquity.

It would be something altogether new to the Christianity established by our Divine Lord and the Apostles, if the Church of modern times taught that, instead of a sovereign Pontiff supported by the Bishops in communion with him throughout the world, and assisted by the constant guidance of the Spirit of Truth, a mere lay tribunal, often not composed of believers, were to be the Supreme Judge of doctrine.

It would be an unmistakable innovation on primitive doctrine, if the Church of modern times were to teach, that, instead of seven Sacraments, there were only two; that the Body of the Lord was not really present in the Blessed Sacrament; that the everlasting and uninterrupted Sacrifice predicted by the last of the Prophets was a mere figment; and that the “one fold,” instead of being, as the Apostle describes it, “*unius labii*,”—of one profession,—were to include the public profession of every variety of doctrine that can be imagined between the Latitudinarianism which rejects the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, eternity of punishment, and indeed every revealed mystery, and that High-Churchism which seems to outsiders to border so closely on Catholicism.

All these things would be startling novelties for primitive Christians, if any of them, in the shape of the learned Saints and Doctors and Fathers of the early times, were again to visit this world, and look around them on the multiplied forms of Christianity.

No doubt these holy personages would, if they ap-

peared in the flesh, lift up their hands in horror at modern corruptions of this kind. It would, on the contrary, if they regarded the old Church "spread throughout the world, and in communion with the Holy See," gladden their hearts to find that, through the complete fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, men, weak and helpless of themselves, had been found faithful in the midst of the storms of revolutions, and the upheavals of thrones and empires; and that "the Faith once delivered to the Saints" had, through their ministry, instead of declining, so grown and developed with time, as to be brought home to the practical knowledge of all its children.

This is what the holy men of past days look down upon from their thrones in Heaven, with never-failing interest and delight. Not a devotion, nor a festival, nor a Definition can be introduced by the Church militant, that enables the little ones of Christ on earth to appreciate more fully the infinite condescension and love of God our Saviour, but their angels, "who always see the face of the Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10), join with the Saints in transports of admiration and holy joy. For if "there is joy before the angels of God, upon one sinner doing penance" (Luke xv. 10), how much greater must be their delight when millions throughout the whole world are excited to love God more heartily, and to serve Him more faithfully by the clearer knowledge of His infinite goodness, exhibited to them in the Devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, and the Sacred Heart, or in the Definitions which attest the glory and the purity and the exceeding dignity of the Virgin-Mother of the Emmanuel!

To a well-instructed Catholic, and one who is filled with the spirit of his religion, there is no spectacle more edifying and consoling than that of the Church militant,



in the midst of the persecutions of the world. He obtains a glimpse, through the darkness of tribulations, of the grand purposes of the Paraclete, who is always with her. Her glory shines out more gloriously through the dim glass of Faith, as her faithful Guardian and Protector gathers her more closely to Himself, and deprives her of every earthly consolation. He sees that, in proportion as she is cut off from the temptations inseparable from worldly magnificence, her heart glows with the fire of Divine Love, and that her solicitude for her children, in the spirit of self-sacrificing charity, seems to absorb all her attention ; and when, under the influence of these supernatural feelings, her voice goes forth to the uttermost bounds of the earth, it is to carry peace, joy, benignity, and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, by some clearer exposition of the Infinite Love of God for souls redeemed by the most Precious Blood of His Divine Son.

If any one could mark the laws which seem to govern the process of doctrinal development, he would see that these Definitions were always preceded by trials arising from heresy, or unbelief, or persecution ; and would soon learn to note, in these apparent evils, only the means whereby the Spirit of God reveals more distinctly to men of good will the marvels of the Divine Mercy.

What but the blasphemies and impieties and persecution of a proud unbelieving world, raving madly against the mysteries of the Incarnation and its complement in the doctrines of the Blessed Eucharist and the Sacred Heart, have in a manner wrung from the Church these solemn declarations of the reality and the immensity of Infinite Love ?

There is no more interesting study for an earnest Christian, capable of appreciating it, than the progress

of what the enemies of the Church designate as "Romish corruptions."

It was this that led Dr. Newman into "the one Fold."

It will, I think, gratify my Catholic readers to hear what he says upon the subject of this "ineffably cogent argument" which, in spite of his strong prejudices that, till a short time before his conversion, forced him to regard the Pope as Antichrist, carried him at last, weary and worn with endless doubts and perplexities and solitudes, into the arms long open to receive him, and laid him down to rest in peace at last on the bosom of the great mother of all true believers.

"It is well known," says the Cardinal, "that, though the creed of the Church has been one and the same from the beginning, yet it has been so deeply lodged in her bosom, as to be held by individuals, more or less implicitly, instead of being delivered, from the first, in those special statements or what are called Definitions under which it is now presented to us, and which preclude mistake or ignorance. These Definitions, which are but the expression of portions of the one dogma which has ever been received by the Church, are the work of time; they have grown to their present shape and number in the course of eighteen centuries, under the exigency of successive events, such as heresies and the like, and they may, of course, receive still further additions as time goes on." His Eminence then continues to say, that the whole subject of this doctrinal development interested him more than anything else, and that it gradually convinced him "that the decrees of later councils, or what Anglicans call the Roman corruptions, were but instances of that very same doctrinal law which was to be found in the early Church; and that in the sense in which the dog-

matic truth of the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin may be said, in the lapse of centuries, to have grown upon the consciousness of the faithful, in that same sense did, in the first age, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity also gradually shine out and manifest itself more and more completely before their minds." ("Anglican Difficulties," p. 320.)

Here is a sound philosophical view, broad and comprehensive, which a man of ordinary intelligence can easily understand. The Church in the beginning, as the Church in modern times, is not a sort of animated fossil. The teaching body in it, as well as the multitude of believers, are filled with a real life, and this life is sustained by the assistance of the Spirit of Truth and the abiding presence of the Saviour.

Christians who read the narrative given by St. John of the Last Supper cannot fail to see that the teaching body, then represented by the Apostles, who sat at table with him, and afterwards constituted by their successors duly called to the ministry of the Word, were to enjoy a presence which would be to them forever a source of unfailing life and spiritual energy, and a bond of perfect unity.

What else can be the meaning of the promise, that they who believed in Him would have the gift of miracles, and the power of doing greater things than He had done while He was visibly amongst them? (John xiv. 12.) And then the promise of an immediate response to prayer, more consoling than that other, that whatsoever His disciples would ask of the Father in His name should be granted—"If you shall ask me anything in My name, that I will do" (John xiv. 14)—what could it mean but a constant and intimate presence? As if He said, "Invoke

me when you are troubled,” and “I will come to you” (John xiv. 18). “You shall know,” even when I am gone up into Heaven, “that you are in me and I in you” (John xiv. 20). And the repeated promises of the presence of the “Comforter” to sustain them in their conflict with the world’s hatred—what else does this signify but this abiding presence with them to the end of time? And this bond of union, that was to keep not only those who heard Him together in the closest unity, but those also “who should believe in their word”—the whole Church,—“I in them and they in Me, that they may be made perfect in one,”—all this can have but one explanation, and that is the explanation of her constitution given by the Church in every age.

She was to be forever guided, assisted, comforted, and united by the abiding presence of God’s Holy Spirit.

Once this is understood, it follows as a necessity that this supernatural life and energy can never be inactive. It must show itself in the great function of the teaching Church to the end of time. And how can this energy more fittingly manifest itself than in the development of these great mysteries contained in the Deposit of the Faith?

“Here,” as Cardinal Newman well observes, “is at once an answer to the objections urged by Anglicans against the present teaching of Rome; and not only an answer to objections, but a positive argument in its favor; for the immutability and uninterrupted action of the laws in question throughout the course of Church history is a plain note of identity between the Catholic Church of the first ages and that which now goes by that name.” (“Anglican Difficulties,” vol. i. p. 395.)

It seems to me that this most effectually answers any objections to modern forms of devotion in the Church.

Granted that they are not in all respects exactly like the forms of worship in primitive times (there is certainly, when the Liturgies are examined, nothing approaching the likeness to be found outside the Catholic Church); granted that there are slight differences, for example, between the way Mass is celebrated at the present time and when the Holy Sacrifice was offered up in the Catacombs; that there is a difference in the manner of administering the Holy Communion; and that Catholics are not now allowed to carry the Blessed Sacrament to their houses, as they were in the early days. All such changes as these do not in the least affect the essentials of the form of worship, which it is clear, from the earliest Liturgies, was necessarily associated, as it is now, with the belief in a Real Presence and the offering up of an unbloody sacrifice.

Granted that there was not in the primitive times the Forty Hours' Adoration, or Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament: is there anything in these devotions that *contradicts* or jars with the Faith of the most early days?

In the time of persecutions, and when the “discipline of the secret” was found necessary, there could not be these outward manifestations of piety.

The Devotion of the Sacred Heart was unknown in Apostolic times, but the substance of this Devotion was recognized in practice from the days when Christ lived upon earth, and Mary Magdalene bathed His sacred feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

In the middle ages, as Father Ryder proves, there were devotions to the Sacred Hands and Feet of our Lord.



The instincts of Catholic piety, guided and controlled by the abiding Spirit of Truth, are always the same. While the formal reason of the worship of the Sacred Humanity will be always unchanged, viz., the intimate and perpetual union with the Divinity, pious Catholics will find a special devotion in rendering their homage to the Sacred Heart, or the pierced Hands and Feet, or the Head crowned with thorns, or the sacred Face impressed for the comfort of Faith, or the towel presented to the Saviour by St. Veronica, as He went forth to death.

It seems to me, that any non-Catholic who believes in the mystery of the Incarnation, as it is explained by the Catholic Church in the creed of St. Athanasius, namely, that in their Divine Redeemer there is no divided Christ, and but one personality; that the Body and Soul to which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity united Himself in the womb of the Virgin had no other personality; and that consequently Mary is really "*Theotokos*," or "the Mother of God"—cannot reasonably or consistently find fault with any Dogma, or Definition, or form of worship, or festival, that will bring out more distinctly the true doctrine.

The only reason he could urge against the novelty would be that these gradually developed forms might, through indiscreet zeal, be carried to excess, and disturb true Devotion. As long as they do not injure Faith, but, on the contrary, tend to bring out more clearly what Faith teaches, and as long as they are regulated by the teaching body guided by the Holy Spirit, and subject to the "*Magisterium*," or government of the Supreme Pastor, whose special office it is "to confirm the Faith of the brethren," there can be no plausible grounds for apprehension.

If Mary is now proclaimed Immaculate, no harm is done to Faith; but Faith, on the contrary, is confirmed by the special honor paid to her who has been, from the beginning of the warfare of heresy, the special guardian of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Every mystery of revealed truth rests on this; and therefore the Church, in declaring her Immaculate, has, in these evil days of unbelief, only paid a special honor to her, "by whom" (as the Church loves to sing) "all the heresies in the world have been crushed."

It would be well for those who are ever inveighing against "Romish corruptions," to examine carefully, and without prejudice, whether or not these supposed "corruptions" have not tended to develop and sustain true Faith.

In the Catholic Church alone is the Incarnation believed in all its plenitude, as it was when, in the Council of Ephesus, Mary was hailed as "Mother of God." Now that Mary is proclaimed Immaculate, the Holy Virgin seems to rise from the position of "the lowly handmaid of the Lord," and to become, as Cardinal Newman says, "the high and strong defence of the Holy One of Israel," and to throw her arms around her Divine Son and to protect him from insult. She is the true "tower of David" in her fair beauty—in her purity and in her affliction, a power that pleads more irresistibly for respect and veneration for "the Man of sorrows," to those whose hearts are not brutalized by "the pride of life," than even the might and majesty of kings. And every devotion and form of prayer that reminds us of the Immaculate Conception is, instead of a "corruption" of true Faith, a tribute of loving homage to the Saviour of the world.

## CONCLUSION.

WHEN I look back on what I have written, one thought seems to absorb all the rest that crowd upon me,—as to whether the book will be read or cared for ; whether it will do good to anxious souls, or throw them back into greater perplexity ; whether it may serve the interests of Faith, Hope, and Charity, or extinguish in many the feeble glimmerings of these Virtues,—and that one absorbing thought is, how weakly I have expressed the conviction which fills my soul of the perfect simplicity and security and comfort of the Catholic Rule of Faith.

This Rule seems to me so clear and evident, that I wonder I have not been able to put the matter more plainly. It might be compassed in a few pages, and yet I have written so many simply to point out what Dr. Milner so well calls “the end of controversy,” and Father Mumford “the question of questions.”

My only comfort is that I have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to bring the subject home to the serious consideration of such of my readers as have never before entertained it. With this end in view, I have labored to enter into their inmost thoughts, in the hope that by putting their difficulties plainly and forcibly, more forcibly perhaps than these difficulties ever presented themselves to the minds of non-Catholic readers, they might be led to ponder on this all-important subject.

The whole question is after all in a nut-shell. All Christians admit the necessity of a Revelation ; and the

fact also that a Revelation has been made, and that the record of this Revelation is contained in the sacred Scriptures. If the written Word of God would of itself explain the full meaning of the Divine message, and answer all doubts as to this true meaning, the matter might rest there. But when it is manifest the letter is deaf and dumb, and in fact dead to all inquiries, no matter how pressing and how earnest; that it is absolutely passive under the most animated and learned discussions; and that, as a fact, the doubtful meaning has completely frustrated the grand design of Christ, begetting "quarrels, dissensions, and sects," instead of that supernatural unity of belief for which He so earnestly prayed, then thoughtful and reasoning Christians must of necessity ask themselves, where is the safe and unerring guide that is to tell them the true meaning of God's written Word?

It is as clear as the light of the noonday sun, that there is no other guide but the teaching Church "spread throughout the world and in communion with the See of Rome." No other Church or congregation, however cogently it feels the necessity of this safe guidance in order to produce Divine Faith, dares to claim it.

Once admit the necessity of this guidance, and then immediately it is evident that the old Church established by Christ on Peter could never, under any circumstances, lead men of good will into error; and consequently that it still holds, and will hold to the consummation of the world, the exclusive right to teach with infallible authority the true meaning of the Divine message.

This is the whole argument; and all I have written is meant only to remove the dust which obscures its force and simplicity.

Suppose it is argued,—“Could not men left to their

own lights have found a way out of the difficulty, by taking up the main or fundamental truths of Revelation admitted by all, and of which there can be no doubt, and reasoning them out to their entire satisfaction?"

The answer to this supposition is obvious: there are no truths no matter how clearly revealed that carry conviction to the minds of those disposed to question or deny them. The Unity and Trinity of God, the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour, the atonement, the future state, have in every age, and never perhaps more than in the present, been the subject of serious and angry discussion.

If men say, surely no one will doubt the existence of one God, the supreme and sovereign Lord and Creator of all things, they will be met by the clamorous shouts of denial from all quarters where free-thought and private interpretation of the sacred Scriptures are carried out to their logical consequences. Putting aside the irrational views of Atheism, what will not Agnosticism and Pantheism and Realism and all the other *isms* that play fast and loose with free-thought Christianity, have to say on this point?

The troubled and anxious inquirer who disregards the Church, will be told by thousands of able and learned men, and in tens of thousands of powerfully written books, that this is the very question which most of all exercises the human reason.

And if, in reply to the arguments thrust upon him from every side in essays and reviews and magazines and journals, he ventures to quote well-remembered texts of Scripture, he will be ridiculed as one behind the progress of the age, which has learned by experience to see in all these texts only mere allegories or figments of oriental



imagery. "You fool," will say to him the prophets and guides of public opinion, "how can you be so stupid as to fancy for a moment that the eternal energy of nature is to be reduced to the contemptible anthropomorphic notions of a Divine Being, which you have picked up from the debasing traditions of the dark ages?"

Should he venture, on the strength of passages taken from the written Word, to say anything about the Divine nature, and the Trinity of Persons, how shall his individual convictions enable him to bear up against the flood of scorn and ridicule that will be poured out upon him by the philosophers of the day. "How," they say, "can you talk of the Infinite and the Eternal,—you who cannot know either by reason or experience even the meaning of these terms which you merely prattle like a parrot, without the consciousness of any meaning? Three Persons actually distinct and yet one! Absurd, do you not know, if you have not lost every gleam of intelligence, that one is not three, and that three can never be one? It is all mere figures of speech that have distorted your reasoning faculties. These peculiar properties of force and energy which you see stamped on nature in all its operations, in science, in society, in the family, in the stone beneath your feet, as in the highest triumphs of mathematical knowledge, three in one,—length, breadth and depth, the father, the mother and the child, the ruler, the ruled and the intermediate government, the circumference, the centre and the radius, the three sides of the triangle,—in all you have these qualities essentially distinct, and yet forming one indivisible something: this is the origin of all these childish notions about the Divine nature. Read your Scriptures with the spectacles of science, and then you will see how crafty men have

deceived you, that they might rule you as the slaves of superstition."

And if the poor bewildered Bible-guided Christian ventures further to speak of Jesus, and His love for mankind, and the atonement, and the hopes of Heaven through the merits of His Saviour, how will faint-hearted, doubting, individual Faith built on mystic phrases, the meaning of which he knows only from what he has heard from others as weak and fallible as himself, sustain him in this conflict with the learning of an unbelieving world which scoffs at the very idea of the atonement?

It is useless to press the argument farther. No man who is really in earnest in his desire to reason out his Faith, however derived outside the Church, can successfully battle with the impiety of the present age.

If one thus sorely tried will say to himself, "I will pray to my Maker for wisdom to read aright His inspired message," and does pray accordingly, will not the words of prayer die upon his lips as he looks round him and sees, in the history of the past vagaries of private judgment, and the wild theories of the present, the natural outcome of mere unreasoning sentiment?

But that one fears to extinguish, by plain outspoken words, the feeble glimmerings of a pious fragmentary faith, how easy it would be to point out, in language intelligible to all, the emptiness of the lamp which is supposed to sustain it!

I know well that even fragmentary Faith is better than none at all, and that this flickering light may with God's supernatural grace enable those who are severely tried by the temptations of bold unbelief to find their way to the feet of the unseen God: surely those who act in co-operation with the common grace of prayer will obtain that

supernatural aid for the securing of which prayer itself was given. As long as there is an earnest desire for more light, it will come at last, even at the eleventh hour.

God forbid that I should say one word to rob a Faith like this of its little vitality! nor would I have ventured to indicate the dangers of private judgment, as I have done in the course of this book, but because I see clearly that the time is fast drawing nigh when, through Godless education, and the impious literature of the day so widely spread, young people will be ashamed to pray, and forget God altogether.

If such as these have no ground to fall back upon but their own poor notions of the meaning of God's Word, and that their traditional or fragmentary Faith is reduced, by contact with daring impiety, to a mere "perhaps," or the state of the unfortunate sailor, so often recorded, who, in his terror of impending shipwreck, cried out, "O God, if there is a God, have mercy on my soul, if I have a soul!" it will be a bad day for those when some strong passion will assail their expiring belief.

It must miserably perish; and then there will be nothing left in the soul but that remorse of conscience which a merciful God has made the offspring of sin itself, the sinner's peculiar grace, that never entirely dies, but can never grow into a real help, when there is no Faith to sustain it—remorse of conscience which, without even the grace of prayer to give it healthy life, must, sooner or later, end in blank despair and reckless self-destruction.

I see so clearly that a blight of this kind is coming on the wretched world that I cannot resist the impulse to raise a cry of warning. Weak and feeble as it is, it may yet reach, through this book, some fainting souls strug-

gling with unbelief, and prove to them "a cup of strength in some great agony."

If what I have written will prove a word in season even to one or two who already feel, even in early life, the misery of a hopeless existence, and cause them to *think*, and then to say with Goethe, "More light," or, with the great Cardinal whose words I have so often quoted, to pray, "Lead kindly, gentle light," then will I feel that all my labor has not been in vain.

If, in reasoning out the argument for the necessity of an Infallible guide in order to have Divine Faith, I have been hard on the belief of Christians who will not hear the Church, I can only say that this apparent harshness is an absolute necessity of the case.

If the principle for which I contend be certain, then every principle, no matter how well sustained by learning, and respectability, and high position, and education, that is contrary to what is absolutely certain, must be false. There can be no doubt whatever on this point. Truth is essentially opposed to error. It is not as if the case stood thus: there is a certain amount of truth in this religious system of authority, and also in the theory of free-thought and individual judgment; and both, when calmly and dispassionately considered, may be reconciled.

No such reconciliation is possible, and there is no *via media* between them. If a man is clearly bound to obey a certain visible authority, he cannot at the same time be at perfect liberty to rebel against that authority. Christianity teaches that obedience to legitimate rule is "not for wrath, but for conscience' sake" (Rom. xiii. 6). And where there is question of truth, the conscientious obligation of accepting it in all its integrity rises above all the sophistries of human passion or deep-rooted prejudice.

There may of course be place for error that is excusable. And throughout the book I have carefully pointed out where such excusable disobedience and rebellion may be supposed reasonably and fairly to exist. No one can safely say to what extent ignorance that is called invincible prevails amongst non-Catholic Christian peoples. All we know is that national prejudices long fostered by ardent feeling, and associated with bitter traditional dislikes and hatred of everything opposed to them, are common and wide-spread, and, humanly speaking, insurmountable.

It is very difficult for those who have been born and brought up in the "one Fold," and have lived constantly amidst Catholics, to form a correct idea of the ignorant yet profound prejudices against the Church which animate the great mass of the people in countries that are mostly Protestant.

Everything connected with Popery is an abomination in their eyes ; and they would almost as soon doubt the fact of their own existence as that this hateful object of the national feeling could be anything but the heap of corruption they, and their fathers before them for three hundred years, have ever believed it to be.

No one understands this better than the distinguished men whose words I have so often quoted in the preceding chapters. Before their conversion, even almost up to the time when they were received into the Church, both Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning shared to the full in these traditional prejudices. The former clung to the long-cherished notion that the Pope was Antichrist, even when he was near the point of making his submission to the Pope's Infallible authority. And Cardinal Manning, speaking of the almost incredible illu-



sions that prevail amongst the Protestant population in England with reference to the Catholic Church, declares that, for the greater part of his life, he fully shared them. "It may seem incredible," he says, "that such an illusion"—that the Catholic Church is corrupt, and has changed the doctrines of the Faith—"exists. But it is credible to me, because for nearly forty years of my life I was fully possessed by this erroneous belief." ("England and Christendom," page 97.)

And he goes on to say—"To all such persons it is morally difficult, in no small degree, to discover the falsehood of the illusion. All the better parts of their nature are engaged in its support: dutifulness, self-mistrust, submission, respect for others older, better, more learned than themselves, all combine to form a false conscience of the duty to refuse to hear anything against 'the religion of their fathers,' 'the Church of their baptism,' or to read anything which could unsettle them. Such people are told that it is their duty to extinguish a doubt against the Church of England, as they would extinguish a temptation against their virtue. A conscience so subdued and held in subjection exercises true virtues upon a false object, and renders to a human authority the submissive trust which is due to the Divine voice of the Church of God." (*Ibid.* 98.)

God alone knows how far such as these are excusable. The great Catholic principle which should guide us in this delicate matter, is that laid down by St. James—"To him, therefore, who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17).

Of course, what I have said about this excusable ignorance applies to Protestants of all denominations. If they are excusable before God for these strong preju-

dices, and do all that is in their power to serve God faithfully, they will surely be helped in some way to find out the truth; for it is an axiom that "to those who do all they can God never refuses His grace," and the Apostle says, "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4).

I would only add that what I have said about the probable extent of excusable ignorance regards mainly the uneducated classes. Those who read and have the means of inquiry, and who know something of the position and claims of the everlasting Church, are bound to satisfy their minds as to the reality or falsity of these claims. If they are careless and indifferent, and think it is much more simple, and more manly, to feed their prejudices, and to join with the ignorant multitude in abusing the Catholic Church, of course they can please themselves; but a day will surely come when the bright light of God's presence at the awful judgment will try the sincerity and reasonableness of such purposes.

Probably the pious old Scotchwoman who, as Irving tells us, was displeased with the Queen for having ridden out on a Sunday, was quite satisfied with her own infallible judgment on Sabbath observance: no doubt she was, for she appears to have thought her judgment superior to that of our Divine Lord Himself. Because when they told her that He plucked ears of wheat on the Sabbath, she said, "Ah, yes, I ken all about that; and I dinna think any the better of Him for it."

Prejudices may evidently be carried to excess; and there are many learned people who are just as unreasonable in their condemnation of Catholic worship and Catholic practices as was this very pious old woman.

When I think of the strong expressions which liberal-

minded Protestants often apply to the exposition of the great mysteries by the Church, and the manner in which she encourages her children to honor them, I am almost convinced, if they were brought to understand that the teaching Church of Christ could not deceive us, that then their prejudices would turn on Christ Himself. They would almost say, for example, if it is true that Christ is really present at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and in the Holy Mass, He ought never to have so demeaned Himself; and such a state of humiliation is quite unbecoming in the Most High.

I may here say why it is I have so constantly quoted from the works of the two English Cardinals, rather than from profound theologians who were born and brought up in the Catholic Church. I have done so for several reasons. Because the testimony of these distinguished men, once Protestant to the back-bone, and understanding better perhaps than any living man the real state of the question, as between the Catholic Rule of Faith, and that in which they had trusted so many years, should deservedly carry more weight with those whose strong prejudices would prevent them from paying the least attention to the statements of theologians, who had not the full opportunities of seeing all the charms which the adherents of Protestantism believe her to possess, and who besides were "bewitched" with Papistical ideas.

I hope that my book will have at least some Protestant readers. They who value so highly the peculiar charm of freedom of thought, and the right to judge for themselves, will surely not share in the narrow-minded view of the Grahamstown parson, who boasted that he had never looked into a Popish book. "*Audi alteram partem*" is a principle which in these latter days has been

brought into more practical application than ever it was before in the history of the world. Constitutional forms of government, from the parish vestry and the municipalities of small towns to the high chambers of the representatives of an empire or a republic, involve the necessity of looking not only at both sides of every question—the yes or the no—but all around it. Hence I felt bound to consult the natural prejudices of this class of possible readers.

Then there is a charm in the polished style which attracts attention, and in the wonderful lucidity with which both these remarkable teachers always lay their doctrines before the public. It seems no effort to them. The most sublime mysteries, the most exalted morality, the highest principles of action are set forth with a facility which astonishes, and with a purity of language which will make their writings the future classics of all countries where the English language is spoken.

Our learned theologians have written chiefly for the learned, and in a language popularly called the language of the learned, and therefore inaccessible to the general public. If I quoted from the works of a St. Thomas, or a St. Augustine, or a Suarez, or a De Lugo, there are few who could have the opportunity of consulting the books of these learned authors, either to verify the quotations or to pursue the subject. Whereas the books of the two cardinals are easily accessible; and the glimpses I have given of their beauties may invite a further acquaintance with their productions, and the cultivation of a friendship that will have lasting and beneficial results.

Another reason is that these distinguished men are living witnesses of the peculiar state of thought in the present age, and of the wild theories and strange guesses

regarding the most important interests of mankind, which it never entered into the minds of the learned doctors of "the ages of Faith" to conceive as possible.

No one will think of saying, that these eminent writers did not understand the most favored notions of High-Churchmen of the day—"the branch theory;" the fanciful conceit of a British National Church coeval with Apostolic times; the grandiose speculation on the three great Churches of primeval times in which the Anglo-Catholic is, with amazing pretension, set alongside of the great Churches of the East and West; the "*filioque*" question; and the fine critical points about the independent teaching of St. Cyprian, and the various historical questions connected with the supposed heresy of Pope Honorius and Liberius; and the long-exploded nonsense about Pope Joan; and the forgeries and deceitful interpolations introduced into the acts of Councils and Pontifical decrees.

Much of their valuable time was wasted in hunting up the records of these grand points; and one can imagine with what contempt for the whole finical dust-exciting splutter, these great minds gave up the study in pure disgust.

If our Divine Lord meant that His little children, and the poor and uneducated, who belong to this class, were to spend their lives in the theological analysis of this huge mass of puerilities, we are at a loss to know what He meant when He blessed the great Eternal Father that the poor had the Gospel preached to them. Calm and tranquil Faith and confidence in His teaching, and the charity that ever grows from the pious contemplation of "the good tidings" of salvation, would be as far beyond their reach, as the scientific theories of the leaders of progress,



and the metaphysical elaborations of a Spencer or a Harrison.

I often note with a keen sense of enjoyment, which afterwards excites painful scruples arising from the gravity of the subject, how the parsons, who are very angry about these distinguished men leaving the Church of England to join the one true Fold, watch their every movement and expression of opinion, in the hope of finding a symptom of regret for having taken this step. Many have so often stated that they were sure to return freed from the delusion that led them to trust in Rome, and conscious of their folly, that they have seriously injured the cause they were vainly hoping to serve, and have left on the public mind an impression that bitter prejudice can lead even the learned and the godly to blacken the purest motives and the most disinterested sacrifices. I have known some who had gone so far as to declare on the evidence of "trifles light as air" that these illustrious converts had actually expressed their regret for having joined the Catholic Church. The solemn declarations of Cardinal Newman of the happiness and peace of mind he has found in the bosom of the Church, and his gratitude to God for the great grace bestowed upon him, will hardly silence such worthies as these. God forgive them if, on grounds that are so clearly mere fabrications, they have endeavored to keep trusting and simple souls from following so glorious an example! Would that those who asperse those noble characters who, like Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning, have renounced all that this world holds dear, to satisfy the voice of conscience, might learn, from their disinterestedness, to give up all regard to human respect and the good opinion of the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ!

Honest duty often requires painful sacrifices, and those who, besides, lacking the courage to make them, endeavor to justify to themselves and others their half-measures and vacillation between the vagaries of Ritualism and ultra protestations against Rome, can hardly expect grace from God, or respect from men, by silly attempts to blacken the reputation of men who have won the respect and admiration of the civilized and educated world.

# INDEX.

---

- AB ACTU ad posse valet consecutio, 128.
- Abraham, his faith like Catholic, 163.
- Abuse of Catholic Church and silly pretensions, 87.
- Acceptation of Dispersed Bishops not necessary to dogma of Faith, 258.
- Accusers of Church betray their own weakness, 117.
- Active and passive conception, 270.
- Agnes and Fabiola—"Shall I lose all?" 130.
- Albigenses, 93.
- Anglicanism, basis of, 208; Anglican Church notions, 235; Cardinal Manning's strong doctrine on, 240.
- Anglican clergy undertaking to answer for those who confide in them, 210.
- Apparitions and Catholic Faith concerning them, 122.
- Apes and Darwinian theory, 46, 47.
- Aping at Catholic ceremonial, 27.
- A priori and a posteriori arguments, must confine myself to former, 72; latter destroys peace, 222; will not touch it, 220, 239, 248; what Cardinals Newman and Manning thought of a posteriori or historical objections, 310.
- Aquinas, St. Thomas, and St. Augustine meeting scientists, 44.
- Arian, the whole world affected by, 261.
- Arguing against fact, 32.
- Argument against miracles, one fact destroys them, 111.
- Argument, a priori and a posteriori, 23, 33, 34, 72, 220, 222; sound principles regarding, 189, 238, 248.
- Argument put plainly for simple Faithful, 70.
- Arthington, 100.
- Arts, fine, degeneracy of, 40, 41.
- Atonement, 22.
- Atheism, how boldly talked in these days, 197, 198.
- Athanasius, his condemnation, Cardinal Newman upon, 263, 264.
- Authoritative teaching not involve slavery, 68, 84.
- Authoritative teaching, Divine, not outside Church, 199, 205; Cardinal Manning on, 205.
- Authoritative teaching in Church of England rests on Rationalism, 207.
- Authoritative teaching, Divine, shut off by rejection of Infallibility, 208.
- Authority, Divine, cannot be invoked by non-Catholics, 158.
- Authority, pretensions to, 29.
- Avarice, fruit of selfishness, ambition, 183, 184.
- Avelling, Edward, his teaching, 167.
- BALAAM, 215.
- "Baptism, Church of," what it means, 210.
- Beaconsfield, Lord, on atheism, 54.

- Beads or Rosary, 142, 143.  
 "Belief, Catholic," 97.  
 Belief in mysteries no mockery, 163; belief in supernatural, chief objection to Infallibility, 214.  
 Benediction of Blessed Sacrament, Cardinal Newman on, 139.  
 Benevolence and charity, 184.  
 Bible reading in schools, 58; reading of, not opposed by Catholic Church, 56; in colleges imperative, 57; Cardinal Newman on, 60; impossibility of agreement from, 61; a farce and a delusion, 62.  
 Bibles, indiscriminate scattering of, a huge mistake, 59; one of the chief causes of unbelief, 60; dangers of scattering, 155.  
 Bible, stay and comfort of many, 55.  
 Bishop Berkeley, 112.  
 Bishop checks error, 246; Bishop's judicial power not affected by Papal Infallibility, 256; Bishop Ullathorne, 260; Bishops as judges, 237.  
 Bockhold of Leyden, 99.  
 Bold words, 193; do not mince matters, 207.  
 Bossuet, his argument weak, 252; quotation from, on Immaculate Conception, 272.  
 Bottalla, Father, on Infallibility, 257.  
 Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, 157.  
 Brandt, his testimony, 99.  
 Brethren-sect, 116.  
 Bryanites sect, 96.  
 "Bull, John, and his Island," 91.  
 CAIPHAS, 215.  
 Calvinism at death, 170.  
 Canonization process, 127.  
 Cardinals Dechamps, Manning, and Newman—first quoted, 271, 281; second quoted, 85, 158, 182, 207, 214, 217, 218, 304, 305, 311; third quoted, 60, 67, 69, 76, 118, 136, 139, 141, 202, 211, 263, 268, 292, 305, 308, 311.  
 Catholic Church requires all to be "unius labii," 226.  
 Catholic Faith at approach of death, 170; warns us against presumption, 175.  
 Catholics will believe anything, 118, 121; Catholics and Good Templars, 95, 96; not taught to confide in works, 177; expect supernatural manifestations, 121, not required to have Faith in them, 124, in simplest form, 65, 298.  
 Catholic Rule of Faith solid, 114; Catholic name exclusive, 236; Catholic Church, definition of, 236; Catholic Church defining not go beyond Deposit of Faith, 228.  
 Chair of Peter, 252.  
 Changes in these days, 197.  
 Charity, Divine, not founded on natural motives, 182; seeketh not her own, 183; of early Christians, 183; destroyed by selfishness, 184; not violating by bold words, 193.  
 Chatterton and ranting, 90.  
 Christ made us free, 85; cannot violate His word, 105; honored by all Christians, 102; could have granted Infallibility, 219.  
 Christianity has leavened the world, 166.  
 Church of England renounces Infallibility, 200.  
 Comparison of pagan philosophers and those of to-day, 43.  
 Conference, Wesleyan, standards human, 29; Daniel O'Connell on, 30.  
 Confession as it is, 134; Cardinal Newman on, 136.  
 Contradictions to primeval teaching in non-Catholic doctrine, 288, 289.  
 Conversion of Lord Ripon, 75.  
 Conversation in railway carriage on Eternity of Punishment, 83.  
 Copping, 100.

- Councils, General, effect of, 237, 238; not decide without considering doctrine received before, 239; difficulty of holding, 262; appeal to, forbidden, 263.
- Credentials of Church, reasonable inquiry to be made into, 69.
- Credibility of doctrine, Locke's system, 208.
- Credulity of non-Catholics, 117; contrast of Catholic teaching and non-Catholic, 120.
- Criticism, newspaper, 43.
- Curry, Dr., Wesleyan, remarkable statement, 156.
- DANGER to society if strong arm of civil power relaxed, 166.
- Darwinian theory, eye-tooth and flexibility of ear-rim, 46, 47.
- Deacon Philip, 31.
- Definition of Catholic Church, 236; of Infallibility, 248; of Immaculate Conception, 272.
- Degeneracy of fine arts in these days, 41.
- Degrading servitude of private judgment, 234.
- Deprivation of original grace, original sin, 269.
- Development, editors ignorant of, 147; ineffably cogent argument of Dr. Newman, 292.
- Difficulties of free-thought unanswerable outside Catholic Church, 22.
- Disbelief in the supernatural general characteristic of the age, 208.
- Dispersed Church, acceptance of Definition of Pope not necessary, 261.
- Disputes in schools of theology, 188.
- Dives in the parable, 173.
- Doctrinal development preceded by trials and heresy, 291.
- EAGERNESS to grasp at anything against Eternity of Punishment, 171.
- Earnest liberal non-Catholics, 132.
- Ecclesia docens, what it is, 237.
- Editors, non-Catholic, on Immaculate Conception, 146; development 147, 283.
- Effects of material progress on supernatural Faith, 216.
- Eliasites, 97.
- Encyclical of Pius IX. on Immaculate Conception, 273.
- Eternal happiness unreal without reasonable Faith, 167.
- Eternal Hope of Canon Farrar, 171.
- Eternity of rewards and punishments, 24; disputation about, 83; merely human speculation in non-Catholics, 168.
- Ethiopian, his difficulty, and Deacon Philip, 31.
- Evidences of design in nature, 53.
- Example of Philosophic Doctor, 127.
- Example of pious non-Catholic Faith, 115.
- Ex cathedra declarations, how known, 264, 265.
- Extremes in matter-of-fact sagacity, 128.
- FABIOLA, extracts from, 130, 145, 148.
- Fact a fact always, 217.
- Faith, one true, 104; solid ground of, 114; Faith, pious, 115; may grow into conviction, 116; obedience of, 118; not required in apparitions, 122; reasonable, impossible outside Catholic Church, 153; earnest, to a certain extent possible outside Catholic Church, 153; resolved when sorely tried into Rationalism, 153; Faith, pious, not unnecessarily to be disturbed, 154; reasonable, necessary, 174; Faith, Divine, in plenitude beyond reach of non-Catholics, 67; Faith and Hope, difference between, 169; source of Charity impossible in corrupt Church, 190; Faith, pious, not to be



- touched but for necessities of times, 202; Rule of, in simplest form, 213, 298; fragmentary, better than none at all, 302.  
 Farrar, Canon, and eternal Hope, 171.  
 Fashion, its laws, 27.  
 Fearful responsibility of those who reject Infallible guide, 35.  
 Festivals, new, in Catholic Church, 288.  
 Frankland, Rev., Wesleyan minister, 29.  
 Free-thought and Rationalism the same, 167; on Eternity of Punishment merely human speculation, 168.  
 "Frozen truth," the, 241.  
 GALLICANISM, 251.  
 Gambling, form of selfishness, 184.  
 George Fox, 100.  
 German Rationalism, tendency to, in Anglican Church, 208.  
 Gibbon's five causes and Dr. Newman, 54.  
 Goethe, "More light," 37.  
 Good Templary, 95.  
 Governments of Europe alarmed at Papal Infallibility, 254; insidious arguments of, 255.  
 Grahamstown Temperance meeting, 95.  
 Greek Church, union with, by Anglicans impossible, 208; and Infallibility, 233.  
 Guesses of the scientists, 19.  
 HACKETT, 100.  
 Hard on belief of non-Catholics, 302.  
 "Hating each other for love of God," 187.  
 Hebrew people following their own will, 179.  
 Herman, 99.  
 Hindoo and his idol, 120.  
 Historical difficulties about Infallibility, how regarded by Cardinals Newman and Manning, 310.  
 Historical ground not entered on in this book, 248, St. Athanasius merely touched on, 263.  
 Holy Ghost, sin against, 36.  
 Honor paid to God by unbounded Faith, 151.  
 Hope, Catholic, contrasted with dreams of non-Catholics, 174, 178; deceitful, 168; how beautiful, 174; old pagan, 165.  
 Humanity, Religion of, necessary consequence of private judgment, 107.  
 Humanum est errare, 109.  
 Hume on miracles, 113.  
 Humility according to non-Catholic notions, 134.  
 Hurter on Sacred Heart quoted by Father Ryder, 286.  
 Hypostatic union with Holy Ghost not involved in Papal Infallibility, 214, 215.  
 Hysterics not "signs and portents," 125.  
 ICARUS, 50.  
 Ignorant men may learn from educated—objection, 64.  
 Illustration of mild form of private judgment, 77; of dangers to Faith, 154.  
 Immaculate Conception, stupid notions of, 146; dogma explains Incarnation, 148; Koran in favor of, 267; not concern Anna, 270; connection with original sin, 267; Mahomet in favor of, 267; Cardinal Newman on, 268; objection of Protestant minister to author, 270; opinions of press on, 282, 283; Active and Passive Conception, 270; Cardinal De-champs on, 271, 281; Bossuet on, 272; numerous applications to have doctrine defined, 273; Definition not due to vanity of Pope, 273; the Definition of, 275; objection—that not found in the sacred Scriptures, 275; objection from St. Paul, 276; objection of a Catholic to author, 277;

- Bishop Ullathorne on, 279; why dispute about? 279; why Pope Pius defined it, 280; dogma not understood, 287.
- Impossibility of union in Faith from Bible reading, 61; illusion, 62.
- Incarnation, mystery of, 24; Fabiola, extract on, 145.
- Indifferent inquirers, 20.
- Indiscriminate scattering of Bibles huge mistake, 59.
- Infallibility, without it reasonable Faith impossible, 62; no Christian sect dares to claim it, 66; Cardinal Newman on this point, 67; a fundamental dogma, 106; no axiom good against, 111; renounced by Anglican Church, 200, 206; not claimed by sects, 204; want of belief in supernatural chief obstacle to, 213, 214; Definition of Papal, 248; Scriptural arguments briefly put, 250; figure of Church essentially opposed to Gallican hypothesis, 251; personal, no restraint on free-will, 214; constrained sinlessness not required for, 215; nothing said about it in early Church, objection, 244; built on rationalism, objection, 244; guide inaccessible, 245; Bishop on the scene, 246; argument from Prophets in favor of personal Infallibility, 219; Dr. Whately's argument against, 229; Active and Passive, 233; Greek Church on, and Wesleyan, 234; Imperator et Pontifex of Greek Church, 234; Infallibility of Pope, not affect judicial power of Bishops, 256, 257; Suarez on, 260.
- Infallible guide, responsibility of those who reject it, 31, 32; belongs to Church to lay down conditions of salvation, 105.
- Ingersoll, 157.
- Inquiry, obstacles to, 20, 21; reasonable, to be made, 69; all bound to make it, 197.
- Inspiration, individual, possible, 109.
- Instantaneous justification and its fruits, 100.
- Interposition, Providential, notion of scientists, 126.
- Interpretation, private, humanizes Revelation, 33.
- Iphigenia, 169.
- Irish supposed credulity, 88.
- Israelites, Christian, 97.
- JANSENISM and its pernicious effects, 253.
- Januarius, the miracle of, 123.
- Jarring sects cannot all be right, 156, 157.
- Jews, their reverence for Old Testament, 58.
- Joanna Southcote and the Jumpers, 92.
- Judgment, private, what it means, Cardinal Newman on, 76; mild form of, 77; impossible, 79, 80; affects lofty tone, 84; real slavery of, 85.
- Judicial power of Bishops not affected by Papal Infallibility, 256, 257.
- Jules Verne, 27.
- KAFFIR witch-doctor, 88.
- Kindness, natural, not free from selfishness, 184.
- "LABII UNIUS" ("of one mouth"), why Church requires it, 226.
- Labors of old philosophers interesting, 49, 50.
- Lacordaire on prejudice, 81, 223.
- Laserre and Lourdes, 126.
- Last prayer of our Divine Lord before His passion, 189.
- Laws of fashion despotic, 28.
- Learned names guard the quasi-philosophy of the day, 48.
- Leverrier, 27.
- Liberal earnest non-Catholics, 135; liberal Protestant notions of Catholic worship, 130.

- Liberty, true, according to Cardinal Manning, 85.
- Littledale, Dr., grave errors in his book against the Catholic Church, 284.
- Local preacher on Irish credulity, 87, 88.
- Locke's principle of credibility, 208.
- Lord Beaconsfield, 54.
- "Loss and gain," 97.
- Love, purest, may be selfish, 183; love that is in Christ Jesus may be destroyed by selfishness, 184.
- MAGISTERIUM in Church checks indiscreet zeal, 296.
- Manning, Cardinal, quoted 85, 158, 182, 207, 215, 217, 218, 304, 305, 308, 310.
- Mass, sacrifice of, extract from Fabiola, 148.
- Material progress, effects of, 217.
- Meaning of the Revealed Word, the chief question, 22, 23.
- Miracles not expected by Protestants, 125.
- Mixed marriages, 185.
- Molière and "Les Precieuses Ridicules," 49.
- Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, 98.
- "More light," Goethe, 37.
- Mosheim, 99.
- "Mountains, can you move them?" 150.
- Mysteries of Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, eternity of rewards and punishments, 24; reasonable explanation of, necessary where no Infallible guide, 23.
- NAME, what's in a? 74.
- Nature, evidences of design in, 53.
- Nearness of some to Catholic teaching not make them Catholics, 27.
- Necessity of teaching plain truth, 116.
- Nestorius, 267.
- Newman, Cardinal, quoted, 60, 67, 69, 74, 118, 136, 139, 141, 202, 211, 263, 268, 292, 305, 308, 310.
- Newspaper criticism: this is a thinking age! 43.
- Nicholas and the Familists, 99, 100.
- Notions of non-Catholics supposed to be liberal, 81.
- No *via media*, 84.
- OBSTACLES to inquiry, 20.
- O'Connell, Daniel, on the Wesleyans, 30.
- Odium Theologicum destructive to domestic peace, 185.
- Old philosophers, their labors, 49, 50.
- Old pious woman more sound in philosophy than scientists, 43, 44.
- One form of religion as good as another, 104.
- Only two ways, 83; only one Protestant minister who said, "Follow your conscience," 210.
- Opportunists on Infallibility, 256.
- PAGAN philosophers, their depravity, 39, 165; comparison with philosophers of to-day, 42; their labors interesting, 49, 50.
- Paine's teaching, natural outcome of private judgment, 226.
- Pandora and the legend, 165.
- Papal Infallibility and Immaculate Conception, 265.
- Passage from Isaias, 246.
- Pasteur, Dr., 42.
- Peace, their end was, 178; may be real, 180.
- "Peculiar People," 92.
- Perhaps, and sailor's prayer, 303.
- Peri, quotation from Moore, 41.
- Perplexity about plain speaking, 197.
- Perrone on Definition, 273.
- Petitio principii, begging the question on Rule of Faith, 278.
- Pharisee and publican, 87.

- Philanthropy, 184.
- Philosophers of to-day, not deserve name, 40.
- Philosophy of to-day guarded by great names, a sham, 48; not suited for public magazines, 48, 49.
- Physical science, its pretensions, 40; how lofty if well directed, 42; how art elevated, 42.
- Pickwick and editor, 264.
- Pilate, 17.
- Pious Faith possible outside Catholic Church, 114; example of, 115; would not disturb it, 154; not to be touched unnecessarily, 202; may grow into conviction, 116.
- Pious old Scotchwoman, 307.
- Plan of Christ to preserve union, 186.
- Plato and Socrates, their errors, 201.
- Pleasure of parent in confidence of child, 163, 164.
- Political dangers of Good Templary, 96.
- Pontifex et Imperator, 234.
- Pope defining under sudden impulse, 258; not inspired, 260; why Pope Pius defined, 280.
- Pope Pius IX., devotion to B. V. Mary, 272; how know if teaching *ex cathedra*, 265.
- Prayers for dying, in Catholic Church, 176; no mere sentiment, 176.
- Preaching and Chatterton, 90; Black-cap, 90.
- Prejudices, force of, 304; excusable, 305; against Christ Himself, 308; against the two Cardinals, 311; of Cardinals Newman and Manning, 305; of educated classes, 307.
- Presence, Real, 63.
- Presumption, warning against, 175.
- Pretension to authority, 29.
- Pride, selfish, 184.
- Primeval Revelation, 54.
- Private interpretation humanizes Revelation, 33; "private right of judgment," 74; what it means, 76; affects lofty tone, 84.
- Promisit, potuit, dedit, 220.
- Prophecy shows possibility of individual Infallibility, 109; about Christ evident, 109.
- Prophets, argument for Infallibility, 219.
- Protestants not expect miracles, 125; liberal, on puerilities of Catholic worship, 130; ladies in garb of nuns, 198.
- Pusey, Dr., 214.
- "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," 288.
- RATIONALISM, outcome of pious Faith, when sorely tried, 153; does not mince matters, 155; and free-thought the same, basis of authority in Church of England, 206, 207; German, 208; foundation of Infallibility, objection, 244.
- Reading of Bible, 55, 56; in colleges, 57; Cardinal Newman on, 60; not produce unity, 61.
- Realities and shams, 32.
- Real Presence, 63.
- Reason limited in spiritual things, 200; may demonstrate certain truths, 201; bound to use it, 223; impossible in way proposed, 223; reasonable inquiry to be made, 69.
- Religion of England, 91; sects 91; of Humanity, 107.
- Responsibility, fearful, in those who reject Infallibility, 35.
- Rest, none, now—all must inquire, 198.
- Revelation, primeval, 54; founded on probabilities not Revelation, 64, 65.
- Reverence of Jews for Old Testament, 58; reverent Faith possible for non-Catholics, 153.
- Revivals, may they not effect good? 101—Reaction, how controlled, 101.

- Ridicule justifiable, 28.  
 Ridiculus mus, 49.  
 Roland, Madame, 74.  
 "Roma locuta est," 188.  
 Rosary, not confined to ignorant, 142; visitor at Maynooth, 143.  
 Rule of Catholic Faith in simplest form, 213; plain and simple, 65.
- SACRED HEART, 285.  
 Sale on Koran regarding Immaculate Conception, 266.  
 Salvation, many necessarily excluded on Protestant Rule, 192, 193; Salvation Army, 93.  
 "Saved, what must we do to be?" 197, 211.  
 Scandalizing little ones a great sin, 192.  
 Science, physical, its pretensions, 40.  
 Scientific studies wisely directed pleasing to God, 51.  
 "Search the Scriptures," meaning of passage, 71.  
 Seat of authority in Anglican Church very doubtful, 235.  
 Secret societies checked by Definition of Papal Infallibility, 256.  
 "Securus judicat orbis terrarum," effect on Cardinal Newman, 188.  
 "See how Christians love one another," 187.  
 Selfishness destroys charity, 184; directly opposed to love in Christ Jesus, 184; insidious, 184, 185.  
 Sense of difficult Scripture passages not determined by fallible authority, 24.  
 Shams and realities, 32.  
 Shibboleths of Dissenters, 31.  
 Sin against the Holy Ghost, 36.  
 "Silly puerilities" of Catholic worship, 133; "pretensions," 87.  
 Sinai, no one dare to rebel there, 161.  
 Slavery and bondage not involved in Catholic Rule of Faith, 68; no slavery to obey God, 84; of private judgment, 184; not to hear and obey Church, 160.
- Sleidan, 99.  
 Socrates and Plato, their errors, 201.  
 Solid ground of Catholic Faith, 114.  
 Somerville, Mary, 38.  
 Special inspiration, 32.  
 Spiritism asked to explain future life, 171, 172; no remedy for Materialism, 173.  
 Strange how Anglican clergymen undertake responsibility of salvation of others, 209.  
 Stupid things said about Immaculate Conception, 146.  
 Suarez on Infallibility, 260.  
 Supernatural fact, one overturns all argument against miracles, 219.
- THEORIES of unbelief seductive to young people, 47.  
 Tortoise, on what does it rest? 203.  
 Traditional belief in the supernatural outside the Church, 218.  
 Turning of tables, Catholics reasonable, non-Catholics credulous, 117.
- UNION of Christendom, attempts vain, 159.  
 Unity in variety, 103.
- "VIA MEDIA" pulverized, 189; vicious circle, objection, 242.  
 Vincent, St., of Lerins, 288.
- WHATELY's argument against Infallibility, 229; texts quoted by him prove the Church a governing power in primitive times, 231.  
 Where is the Protestant Rule of Faith laid down in the Bible? 278.  
 Worship not now as in early days, objection, 288.



# CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

AND

## MODERN UNBELIEF.

---

A PLAIN AND BRIEF STATEMENT

OF

The Real Doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church,

AS OPPOSED

To those falsely attributed to her, by Christians who reject her authority,  
and by Unbelievers in Revelation ; that thus

### A CONTRAST

May be easily drawn between the "Faith once delivered to the Saints,"

AND

The Conflicting Theories, and Scientific Guesses of the present Age ; and  
serving as a

### REFUTATION

To the assaults of modern Infidelity.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. J. D. RICARDS, D.D.

*Bishop of Retimo, and Vicar Apostolic of the Eastern  
Vicariate of the Cape Colony.*

---

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND ST. LOUIS:

BENZIGER BROTHERS,

*Printers to the Holy Apostolic See.*

A book for the Times!

Large 12mo, extra cloth, net, \$1.00.

**The Cheapest and Best Book for Missions.**

# Catholic Belief:

or, A Short and Simple Exposition of Catholic Doctrine.

By the **Very Rev. Joseph Faà di Bruno, D.D.** Revised and adapted to the United States by **Rev. Louis A. Lambert**, author of "Notes on Ingersoll," etc.

With the Imprimatur of Their Eminences the Cardinal, Archbishop of New York, and the Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster, and an Introduction by the Right Rev. S. V. Ryan, Bishop of Buffalo.

---

16mo, flexible cloth, . . . . . 40 cents.

10 copies, \$2.65 ;

50 copies, \$12.00 ;

100 copies, \$20.00.

---

This is an admirable book of instruction on Christian Doctrine for both Catholics and Protestants.

**Short, clear, simple and concise** it meets the needs of a numerous class of non-Catholics, who yearning after Truth, unsettled in their convictions, sincere in their inquiries, and curious to know **just what Catholics do believe**, have neither leisure nor inclination to pore over large volumes or study elaborate dogmatical treatises.

The author evinces rare ability and tact in setting forth **Catholic principles in a few words, with winning simplicity and yet scholastic accuracy.** He treats of all the leading dogmas of the Church, yet as his aim is to remove "from minds otherwise well disposed, misconceptions of our holy religion, and still deep-rooted prejudices against Catholic faith," he naturally addresses himself more particularly to, and dwells more lengthily on, those doctrines which Protestantism has rejected. Another feature of the work is its **entire freedom from anything which might give offence** to any one, without, however, compromising or disguising the truth. He shows throughout a delicate consideration for those in error, and a just appreciation of the difficulties, intellectual, moral, and social, which converts to the Faith must encounter and overcome.

There is another feature of the book which is rarely found in controversial works : Though entirely master of the situation as regards the principles, the arguments, and facts at issue, the author does not rely wholly on these. The grace of God is essential to a true conversion, and hence this little book treats of grace and the means of obtaining it. Prayer is the primary means of grace, and hence a **spirit of prayer pervades the whole work, and the second part is specially devoted to this subject.**

The book is just the one to put in the hands of a Protestant friend, confident that Catholic faith will more readily reach the soul and bring conviction to the understanding, when Catholic charity has won the heart and favorably predisposed the will.

**Over 80,000 copies of the book have been sold in England,** and it has perhaps more than any other work been the means of bringing very many into the Church.

---

**BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND ST. LOUIS.**

# MEDITATIONS

FOR

## EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR,

COLLECTED FROM DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL WRITERS

*And Suited for the Practice Called*

**"Quarter of an Hour's Solitude."**

EDITED BY

REV. ROGER BAXTER, S. J.,

OF GEORGETOWN COLLEGE.

This book was first written in Latin, in 1639, by N. B. (an English religious), and handed around in manuscript for years, during the times of persecution in England, where it was used by many holy persons. It was translated into English in 1669 by Rev. E. Mico, and revised and modernized in 1822 by Rev. Roger Baxter, S. J., of Georgetown College. It is now republished and revised in the 251st year of Jesuit labor in the United States by REV. P. NEALE, S. J., of St. Inigo's, Md.

---

*"Recte novit vivere qui recte novit orare."* "He knows how to live well who knows how to pray well."—ST. AUGUSTINE.

*"Every day will I bless Thee: and I will praise Thy name forever, yea, for ever and ever."*—Ps. cxlv. 2.

---

With a Letter of Approbation from  
His Grace, Most Rev. JAMES GIBBONS, Archbishop of Baltimore.

---

12mo, Cloth, 512 Pages, - - \$2.00.

---

BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND ST. LOUIS.

# PICTORIAL LIVES OF THE SAINTS,

WITH REFLECTIONS, FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

WITH A PREFACE BY

**Rev. EDWARD MCGLYNN, D.D.,**

PASTOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, NEW YORK.



ST. BRIDGID RECEIVING THE VEIL.

The present volume offers in a compendious form the lives of many eminent servants of God, forming, as it were, **A BOOK OF DAILY MEDITATIONS.** It is embellished with a beautiful Chromo Frontispiece of the Holy Family and a full-page picture of **St. Patrick the glorious Apostle of Ireland**, made, expressly for this work, from a fine steel engraving. In addition the book contains an illustration for almost every life given, altogether **NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS**, making it the most attractive book now published. To crown all, there is a Preface by the learned and eminent **Dr. Edward McGlynn**, in which is set forth in burning words the great benefit to be gained by reading and meditating on the Lives of the Saints, those shining stars of heaven, the glory of the Church, who shed an ever-luminous ray o'er the narrow and stormy path which all must travel in order to reach the haven of eternal bliss.

The work has been greatly admired by **OUR HOLY FATHER, POPE LEO XIII.**, who sent his special blessing to the publishers, by the hands of Very Rev. Dr. Hostlot, Rector of the American College, Rome. It is approved by His Eminence the Cardinal, Archbishop of New York; The Most Reverend Archbishops of Milwaukee, Oregon, Philadelphia; The Right Reverend Bishops of Arizona, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Erie, Fort Wayne, Galveston, Grass Valley, Greenbay, Leavenworth, Louisville, Marquette, Nesqueh, Ogdensburg, Peoria, Providence, Savannah, Scranton, St. Cloud, St. Paul, Wheeling.

The work is issued in the best style on highly calendered tinted paper, and the side is beautified by a symbolical design of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin, the Queen of All Saints. Sold only by Subscription.

Elegantly bound in extra cloth, full gilt side, \$3.50; elegantly bound in extra cloth, full gilt side, gilt edges, \$4; elegantly bound in French morocco, full gilt side, gilt edges, \$5.50

**BENZIGER BROTHERS,**

*Printers to the Holy Apostolic See,*

**NEW YORK, 36 & 38 BARCLAY STREET.**

CINCINNATI, 143 Main Street.

St. Louis, 206 South 4th St.



MAILED FREE, TO ANY ADDRESS, ON RECEIPT OF PRICE.

# NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

ON THE

Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHIEFLY INTENDED

FOR THE USE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES.

BY THE

REV. FATHER BRUNO VERCRUYSE, S. J.

THE ONLY COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

PUBLISHED WITH THE APPROBATION AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE AUTHOR.

WITH THE APPROBATION OF THEIR EMINENCES THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP  
OF NEW YORK AND THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN.

2 vols., 1244 pages. Extra cloth, beveled boards, red edges, \$5.

A work I have long desired. † JOHN M. HENNI, *Archbishop of Milwaukee.*  
The best book of its kind in the English language, with which I am acquainted.

† A. M. A. BLANCHET, *Bp. of Nesqueley.*

Although designed for religious communities, I would recommend its attentive perusal  
to all those who aspire to Christian perfection. † ANTOINE, *Bp. of Sherbrooke.*

They are really *practical* Meditations, which ought to be in the hands of all persons.

† LOUIS, *Bp. of Burlington, Vt.*

I am confident that the use of them will prove highly beneficial to all who aspire to  
Christian perfection.

T. CHARAUX, S. J., *Superior-General of the Mission of New York and Canada.*

---

## A MEMORIAL OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

CONTAINING

All that a Soul, newly converted to God, ought to do that it may  
attain the Perfection to which it should aspire.

FROM THE SPANISH OF

The Venerable F. Lewis de Granada,

OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC.

REVISED EDITION, WITH A PREFACE BY

ONE OF THE DOMINICAN FATHERS OF NEW YORK.

One Vol., 18mo, cloth, 420 pp., 75 cts.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM

THE PROVINCIAL OF THE DOMINICAN FATHERS.

New York, 28th February, 1874.

MESSRS. BENZIGER BROTHERS:

DEAR SIRS: We are pleased to find that you still continue the publication of that most  
excellent work, "A MEMORIAL OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE." The offspring of the genius and  
piety of the Venerable Louis of Granada, it has lived in all languages for three centuries,  
and received the approbation of the whole Christian world. Feeling that its circulation  
would do an immense good, we would be glad if our Fathers would recom-  
mend it to the Faithful at our Missions.

This new translation, by one of our Friars, removes the objections made to former  
editions, and is the only one of which we approve.

J. A. ROTCHFORD, O. P.

BENZIGER BROTHERS, New York, Cincinnati, & St. Louis.



MAILED FREE, TO ANY ADDRESS, ON RECEIPT OF PRICE.

## GOOD READING FOR THE YOUNG.

In the hope of being able to supply a long-felt want, the subscribers have issued a series of

THOROUGHLY GOOD, MORAL, AND INTERESTING

books, suitable for children from nine to sixteen years of age,

ELEGANTLY AND ATTRACTIVELY BOUND,

and at

A PRICE WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL.

### FIRST SERIES.

*8vo. With Frontispiece.*

Beautifully Bound in Imitation Cloth, with Sides and Back in Black and Gold.

Price, per volume, 50 cents.

Anthony.	Marcelle.
Bertha.	The Adventures of a French
Blanche de Marsilly.	Captain.
Captain Rougemont.	The Adventures of a Casket.
Cassilda.	The Fisherman's Daughter.
Conversations on Home Edu-	The Great-Grandmother's Secret.
cation.	The Priest of Auvergnay.
Episodes of the Commune.	The Better Part.
	The Village Steeple.

### SECOND SERIES.

*12mo. With Frontispiece.*

Tastefully Bound in Imitation Cloth, with full Gilt Sides and Back.

Price, per volume, 35 cents.

Life of Our Blessed Lord.	Lamoriciere.
Life of the Ever-Blessed Virgin.	Life of St. Patrick.
The Diary of a Confessor.	The Holy Isle.
	A Man at Twelve.

### THIRD SERIES.

*18mo. With Frontispiece.*

Attractively Bound in Imitation Cloth, with full Gilt Sides and Back.

Price, per volume, 15 cents.

Adolphus.	Nina and Pippo.
A Broken Chain.	The Baker's Boy.
Nicholas.	The Last Days of the Papal Army.
	Zuma, a Peruvian Tale.

Most admirable in their kind.

Commendable in their contents, attractive in their appearance, and remarkably cheap.

† THOMAS FOLEY, *Bishop of Chicago.*

† ANTOINE, *Bishop of Sherbrooke.*

Their beautiful appearance, highly moral and religious tone, and extreme cheapness, at them admirably for the object for which they are intended.

† A. M. A. BLANCHET, *Bishop of Fort Vancouver.*

Excellent, and very appropriate.

† L. Z. MOREAU, *Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.*

Elegantly gotten up, and very reasonable in price.

† P. T. O'REILLY, *Bishop of Springfield.*

Beautiful presents for Schools.

† E. P. WADHAMS, *Bishop of Ogdensburg.*

Good and useful Books.

THOMAS S. PRESTON, *V.G.*

They have my fullest approbation.

G. RAYMOND, *V.G., New Orleans.*

They please me very much. H. HUDON, *S.J., Pres. S. Francis Xavier's College, N. Y.*

Admirable books, so cheaply gotten up and so prettily bound that we wonder much you can pay expenses on them. If Catholic literature was reduced in price, and made as presentable as these books, it would be a boon.

THE SISTERS OF MERCY, *Eureka, California.*

You merit the approval and gratitude of the Catholic Schools at large, for the publication of "The Premium Book Library" Series. SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME, *Philadelphia.*

BENZIGER BROTHERS, New York, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.

# SHORT STORIES

## ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE;

A COLLECTION OF EXAMPLES,

# Illustrating the Catechism.

Translated from the French  
BY MISS MARY McMAHON.

---

12mo., Cloth. With 6 Full-page Illustrations, \$1.00.

---

The usefulness of example in religious teaching is universally admitted, but as no little research is necessary to find suitable examples, this book attempts to supply them. The ideas are suited to the comprehension of the young minds for whom the work is especially intended, and under the intelligent direction of pious instructors, will prove not only a worthy complement to **Deharbe's Catechism**—whose order and arrangement it follows—but will add a constant and varied interest to the religious instruction.

Children are always eager for stories, and the Catechism class will never seem long or tedious to the pupils, if, from time to time, one of them is selected to read or to relate some of the historical facts to be found in this collection. Of the choice of examples, no justification is necessary, for it is certain that the pupil who goes through the book thoroughly and attentively, will acquire a knowledge of not only the principal personages of the Old and New Testament, but also of those of the Church.

The original work, which is

**Approved by a Cardinal, three Archbishops,  
and many Bishops**

of France, has passed through several editions, and the publishers are confident that this translation has only to become known to meet with like success.

---

BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, and ST. LOUIS.

## A Great Success! Over 40,000 sold!

The Right Rev. Bishop of Erie writes: "These books must and should receive the name of

# "The Catholic Family Library."

## The Christian Father;

What he should be, and what he should do. With Prayers suitable to his condition. From the German by Rev. L. A. Lambert, Waterloo, N. Y. With an Introduction, by Rt. Rev. S. V. RYAN, D.D., C.M., Bishop of Buffalo.

Paper,.....25 cents	Cloth,.....50 cents
Maroquette,.....35 "	French Mor., flex., red edges, \$1.00

## The Christian Mother;

The Education of her Children and her Prayer. Translated by a Father of the Society of Jesus. With an Introduction by the Most Rev. JAMES GIBBONS, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore.

Paper,.....25 cents	Cloth,.....50 cents
Maroquette,.....35 "	French Mor., flex., red edges, \$1.00

## A Sure Way to a Happy Marriage.

A Book of Instructions for those Betrothed and for Married People. Translated by Rev. Edward I. Taylor.

Paper,.....30 cents	Maroquette,.....40 cents
Cloth,.....60 cents.	

In token of my appreciation, I request you to forward me **A thousand (1000) copies** of each of the two former books, and **five hundred (500)** of the third for distribution among my people.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ JAMES VINCENT CLEARY, *Bishop of Kingston.*

**From the Pastoral Letters of Rt. Rev. M. J. O'FARRELL, D.D., Bishop of Trenton.**

"For Parents we recommend 'THE CHRISTIAN FATHER' and 'THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER,' in which they will fully learn all their duties to their children."—*Pastoral*, 1883.

"We **strongly recommend for your perusal and serious consideration** two little books lately published; one is entitled 'A SURE WAY TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE,' and the other 'An Instruction on Mixed Marriages,' by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Ullathorne.—*Pastoral*, 1882.

Warmly recommended and approved by **Five (5) Archbishops** and **Twenty-one (21) Bishops**, as follows:

### The Most Rev. Archbishops of

BALTIMORE, CINCINNATI, OREGON, TORONTO, Can., TUAM, Ireland

### The Right Rev. Bishops of

ALTON,	GRASS VALLEY,	LONDON, Can.,	NEWARK,	ST. PAUL,
BUFFALO,	KINGSTON, Can.,	MARQUETTE,	OGDENSBURG,	SAVANNAH,
COVINGTON,	LA CROSSE,	NATCHEZ,	ST. CLOUD,	TRENTON,
ERIE,	LITTLE ROCK,	NESQUALLY,	ST. JOHN, N.B.	VINCENNES,
		WILMINGTON.		

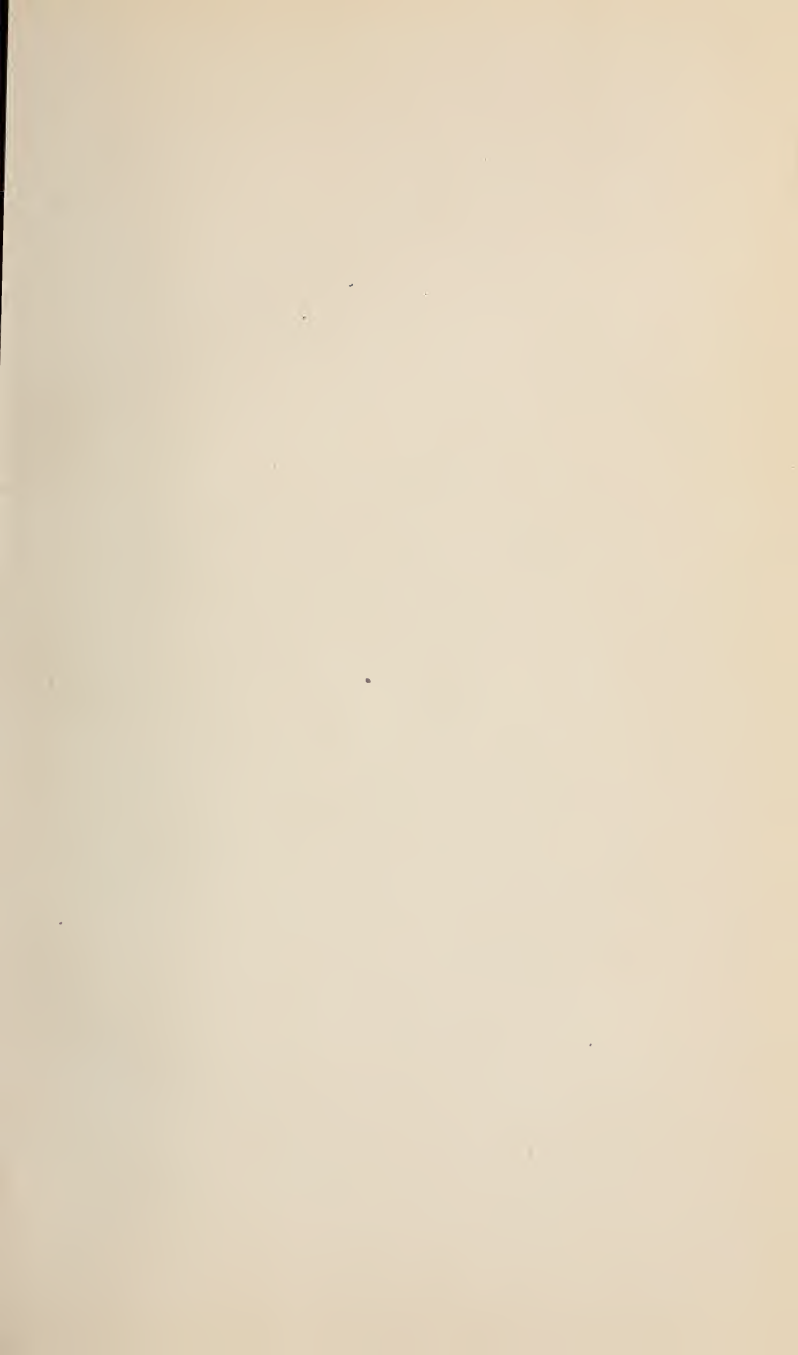
*A Most Liberal Discount to those who order in Quantities.*

**BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND ST. LOUIS.**









Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Jan. 2006

**PreservationTechnologies**  
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111

BX 1751



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 288 734 A

